This is a digital copy of a book that was preserved for generations on library shelves before it was carefully scanned by Google as part of a project to make the world's books discoverable online.

It has survived long enough for the copyright to expire and the book to enter the public domain. A public domain book is one that was never subject to copyright or whose legal copyright term has expired. Whether a book is in the public domain may vary country to country. Public domain books are our gateways to the past, representing a wealth of history, culture and knowledge that's often difficult to discover.

Marks, notations and other marginalia present in the original volume will appear in this file - a reminder of this book's long journey from the publisher to a library and finally to you.

Usage guidelines

Google is proud to partner with libraries to digitize public domain materials and make them widely accessible. Public domain books belong to the public and we are merely their custodians. Nevertheless, this work is expensive, so in order to keep providing this resource, we have taken steps to prevent abuse by commercial parties, including placing technical restrictions on automated querying.

We also ask that you:

+ *Make non-commercial use of the files* We designed Google Book Search for use by individuals, and we request that you use these files for personal, non-commercial purposes.

+ *Refrain from automated querying* Do not send automated queries of any sort to Google's system: If you are conducting research on machine translation, optical character recognition or other areas where access to a large amount of text is helpful, please contact us. We encourage the use of public domain materials for these purposes and may be able to help.

+ *Maintain attribution* The Google "watermark" you see on each file is essential for informing people about this project and helping them find additional materials through Google Book Search. Please do not remove it.

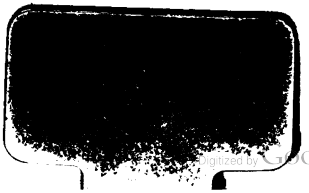
+ *Keep it legal* Whatever your use, remember that you are responsible for ensuring that what you are doing is legal. Do not assume that just because we believe a book is in the public domain for users in the United States, that the work is also in the public domain for users in other countries. Whether a book is still in copyright varies from country to country, and we can't offer guidance on whether any specific use of any specific book is allowed. Please do not assume that a book's appearance in Google Book Search means it can be used in any manner anywhere in the world. Copyright infringement liability can be quite severe.

About Google Book Search

Google's mission is to organize the world's information and to make it universally accessible and useful. Google Book Search helps readers discover the world's books while helping authors and publishers reach new audiences. You can search through the full text of this book on the web at `http://books.google.com/`

Digitized by Google

600079113R



Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

MAN,

CONSIDERED

SOCIALLY AND MORALLY.

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

MAN,

CONSIDERED

SOCIALLY AND MORALLY.

BY GEORGE SPARKES,

LATE MADRAS CIVIL SERVICE.

LONDON:

LONGMAN, GREEN, LONGMAN, ROBERTS & GREEN.

MDCCCLXV.

265. k. 3.

Digitized by Google

LONDON:
PRINTED BY WERTHEIMER AND CO.,
FINSBURY CIRCUS.

Digitized by Google

PREFACE.

For some years, the Author frequently wrote down, for his own after-consideration, the most noteworthy opinions on moral and social topics, which he heard or read. The memoranda thus made having become a bulky and incoherent mass, he employed his leisure in endeavouring to form them into something like a connected whole. Many links had, of course, to be supplied, and a considerable amount of original matter to be inserted; but all that had been taken from other writers was left, as far as it was convenient, in their own words; and this applies not only to mere expressions, but sometimes even to whole sentences. To have altered these, without improving them, seemed undesirable. Such was the origin of the present Volume, and the Author, or rather Compiler, thinking that what was interesting to himself, might possibly prove interesting to others also, decided on printing the manuscript.

Digitized by Google

As, however, most of the subjects, here freely discussed, still remain fertile sources of controversy, every reader must be prepared, at times, to meet with some conclusions and observations, with which he is unable to coincide.

To give a complete list of all the works which have been laid under contribution, would, at this distance of time, be a difficult task. Suffice it to say, that the leading ideas and principles are chiefly those of Aristotle, Locke, Butler, Paley, Coombe, Whately, and J. S. Mill. The extracts from Greek and Latin authors, which are occasionally mixed up with the English text, and left untranslated, may appear, to modern taste, somewhat incongruous, though in accordance with many examples in our earlier literature. But most of these extracts are merely poetical or rhetorical illustrations, which may be omitted without weakening the general argument, and which would lose, if translated, their peculiar and characteristic beauty.

BROMLEY IN KENT,
March 30th, 1865.

Digitized by Google

SUMMARY OF CONTENTS.

PAGE.

How did the World originate?—Has it existed from Eternity, or did it come by Chance, or is it the Result of Natural Laws, or was it created by an Intelligent Being? . . 1

The Attributes of the Deity 4

Pantheism, and the Doctrine of the Vēdas 5

A Superintending Providence.—Prayer 6

The Existence of Angels 11

Matter.—Life.—The Fixity of Species 12

Man.—Body and Soul.—Instinct and Reason . . . 15

Materialism.—The Immortality of the Soul . . . 18

Age of the World.—Various Races of Men . . . 25

Civilisation.—Its nature, advantages, and evils . . . 30

Sources of knowledge.—Perception, reasoning, and testimony.—Ideas not innate.—Truths and Half-Truths . 39

Ancient Philosophy.—The Socratic School.—The New Academy.—Probability.—Baconian Philosophy . . 44

Human Faculties.—The Phrenological Enumeration.—Every Faculty good if used aright.—Differences of original Mental Constitution.—The Will.—Differences of Temperament.—Formation of Character 50

Material, Vital and Moral Laws.—Every one of them good, and invariable.—Health 60

A Moral Sense.—Differences in the Ethical Systems of various Nations.—The Will of God the Basis of Morality.—How a knowledge of it is to be obtained 66

Digitized by Google

PAGE.

Virtue a middle point between two Vices.—Our Duty to God.—Our Conduct towards Men tested by the principle of Utility.—Objections to this principle 73

Christianity of the present day.—Kindness to Animals.—Lower motives often aid Virtue.—Definition of Virtue . 85

Are the Tendencies of Mankind towards Good or Evil?—Object and means of Moral Culture.—Its actual Results . . 94

Selfishness and Self-Love.—Temporal rewards of Virtue.—A good Conscience.—What are the causes of Man's Wickedness? 104

Moral Responsibility.—Is Man a Free Agent? . . . 116

Human Happiness.—Pleasure and Pain 123

Consolations under Afflictions 140

Old Age and Death 149

Origin of Evil 154

Digitized by Google

MAN, CONSIDERED SOCIALLY AND MORALLY.

In discussing, as we propose to do, various subjects interesting to man, we cannot omit the most important of all, namely, the relation in which he stands to his Creator; but as the Creator is not an object of sense, and therefore as his existence is not absolutely self-evident, we must, like the mathematicians, prove our fundamental proposition before we begin to build upon it. The chief argument, well handled by Cicero and ably modernized by Paley, has, however, by frequent repetition been worn so threadbare, that some apology seems needed for producing it again. We will, however, be as brief as possible.

To the question then, "Whence came the world," we say that various answers have been given, of which the following are the chief:—

1st. That the world, as now constituted, has existed from eternity.

2nd. That it came by chance.

3rd. That it is the result of certain natural laws, or rather of certain natural and necessary properties of matter.

4th. That it is the work of an intelligent being.

The first supposition is negatived by geology,

Digitized by Google

which shows that every thing on earth took its present configuration in time, and not in eternity.

The second is negatived by the fact that chance is altogether an imaginary thing. If we meet a friend on the road we call the meeting *accidental*, only because neither of us intended or expected it, though it was the natural and necessary result of two persons proceeding from different points to the same spot. Chance, then, is synonymous with fortune, good or bad, and simply denotes the effect of a cause which we either did not anticipate, or knew not how to control: it is therefore not an agent. But even if we take the popular view of chance, it is impossible to believe that so well ordered a world could have proceeded from so disorderly a source. Can any one conceive that a number of Greek letters thrown at random out of a bag, could arrange themselves by chance so as to form a well-constructed poem, as the Iliad.

The third supposition is the one adopted by most modern atheists. Its supporters admit that it is not capable of direct proof, but argue that the imperfections which appear in the world militate against the idea of its having been created by a perfect and intelligent being. That ignorance on such subjects is the lot of man, and that analogies, drawn from human works and contrivances, cannot be applied to matters entirely beyond our cognizance. Finally, that it is quite as easy to imagine matter self-existing, with certain attributes or laws, as to suppose a self-existing Deity.

To this it may be replied that the supposed imperfections of creation, such as the number of seeds

Digitized by Google

which prove abortive, and apparently fail to fulfil their intended design, may yet fulfil others of which we are ignorant. But even if we grant such imperfections real, it would not follow that there was no Creator; it would be as though we were to enter a watchmaker's, and after having discovered that several of his watches kept bad time, inferred that the contents of his shop required no master-mind to originate them.

Were matter unchanged and unchangeable from all eternity, it might have been self-existing, and thus we may conceive a self-existing Creator; but all change is an effect, and every effect requires a cause; therefore, all the changes of the world must be referred to some great first cause, and the atheist is unable to account for them in any other way.

There remains, then, the fourth supposition, the truth of which has been admitted in all ages by the majority of mankind. The world abounds in contrivances and marks of design, therefore it must have had a contriver, and that contriver is God. We might, indeed, have arrived at this conclusion by simply referring to the first verse of the Bible, but our object is to discover how far human reason may be sufficient to decide the various questions which we shall have occasion to discuss; our decisions then will rest not on authority, but on argument, and in the case before us, St. Paul himself adopted a similar course, as appears from Acts xiv. 17, and Rom. i. 19, 20. But though we do not intend founding our theories on scripture, we by no means purpose to ignore its existence; on the contrary, we shall continually refer to it as illustrating or connected with our subject matter, and

Digitized by Google

on some rare occasions may even touch upon a few points confessedly theological.

From the works of the Creator we learn something of His nature and attributes. When, for instance, we survey the universe, and see how one thing is fitted and as it were dovetailed into another; how the eye is formed to receive light, and again, how the light is tempered to the power of the eye; and further, when on examining the skeletons of the various vertebrate animals, differing so much in their outward configuration, we find one archetypal idea pervading them all, so that in the paddle of the whale we can trace, though in a less developed state, every bone which enters into the composition of the human hand, we are led to infer the unity of God, that is, that the Deity is either a single intelligent being, or, if more than one, all acting in perfect harmony.

The Omnipotence of God is loudly proclaimed by everything around us. It is difficult to say whether we are more impressed by the greater manifestations of power disclosed by astronomy, or by the minuter ones revealed by the microscope. An insect's eye, or a butterfly's wing, becomes more wonderful as we increase the magnifying power; while the finest productions of human workmanship are incapable of sustaining such a test. It is only, however, when some *new* instance of the Divine power is brought to our notice that we feel adequately on this subject. The wonders which we daily witness have become so familiar that they cease to excite our attention.

The Omnipresence of God is inferred from the care He takes of all His works. His centre is every-

Digitized by Google

where, His circumference nowhere; and of His character it has been justly said, that truth is His substance and light His shadow.

Some, while admitting a Deity, have supposed Him to be a mere *anima mundi*, a spirit controlling and working in matter which is co-eternal with Himself, but having no existence beyond or out of it. His power over matter would therefore be limited by its capabilities, and hence the imperfection of existing things. This doctrine is Pantheism; it professedly justifies idolatry, that is, the worship of material substances, on the ground that they are parts of the Deity.

An argument against this doctrine has been derived from the properties of the human mind. We feel that we have a personal, conscious, and independant existence, totally irreconcileable with the idea that we are only a part of the world-governing soul.

But there is another doctrine often termed Pantheism which is taught in the Vēdas, according to which God, and He alone, existed from all eternity; and as nothing can be created out of nothing, the universe was created by Him from Himself. It is therefore a part of Him, and will finally be reabsorbed into His substance. The difficulty of recognizing the omnipresent Deity is supposed to arise from the Māya, or delusion, which darkens the human intellect; thus God is made not only omnipresent, but in reality the only actual existence. On this broad ground the Vēdas lay the foundation of their doctrines, inculcating equanimity towards all persons and events, and benevolence towards the animal creation.

Digitized by Google

Manu, cap. xii., v. 91.—"Equally perceiving the Supreme soul present in all beings, and all beings in the Supreme soul, the good man sacrifices his own spirit by fixing it upon the spirit of God, and thus approaches the nature of that Divinity who shines by His own effulgence."

Though most Christians maintain that the world was created out of nothing, and is totally distinct from God, yet many writers, particularly those of the mystical school, use language in no wise differing from that of the Vēdāntis. They speak of God pervading all things, speaking in the thunder, blossoming in the trees, etc., and Pope states the same more broadly still :—

> "All are but parts of one stupendous whole,
> "Whose body nature is, and God the soul."
>
> *Essay on Man*, v. 266.

Having thus inferred a Creator, the next question is, what part he takes in the active government of the world. All things appear to proceed by general and unbending rules, effect following cause with unerring certainty. It is this mechanical regularity which has made many hesitate in admitting a superintending providence; they imagine that certain laws were impressed upon nature at the beginning, and that these laws were so arranged as to be productive of general good, though often of evil to individuals. In short, that the interests of the many were consulted, but the welfare of the few uncared or.

The strong point of this theory is, that it accords exactly with the general appearance of the existing

Digitized by Google

state of things. Science is, day by day, demonstrating that events formerly deemed supernatural (by which we understand things not only exceptional, but brought about by the Creator independently of the use of means) have an intelligible and sufficient cause, and leads us to infer, by analogy, that if our knowledge were more extensive, we should find everything on earth subject to regular and immutable law. Those who deny a superintending providence are consistent in denying also the efficacy of prayer, unless it be beneficial by some reflex action on ourselves. When Diagoras observed in the temple at Samothrace the votive offerings of those who had been saved from shipwreck, he asked whether none of those who perished had also made vows.

But it seems unphilosophical to allow that the Deity has cared for some interests and not for others, or to suppose that He wanted either the power or will so to frame laws as to meet all cases. If some events are providential, surely we may infer that all are; for where can we draw the line? The tendency of the doctrine is to practical atheism. The existence of a God is conceded, provided He does not concern Himself with human affairs—Sit Divus, modo non sit vivus. What affection could we feel towards a Being who thought our personal interests and conduct unworthy of his notice. It was not under the influence of any such doctrine that M. Park, languishing in the deserts of Africa, gained consolation and confidence at the sight of the little moss Dicranum bryoides, (a native, by the bye, of England also,) and felt that the Creator and Preserver of that moss would not be unobservant of him.

Digitized by Google

The second supposition is that the laws were so arranged from the beginning as to take in all possible cases, and that what appear to be injurious and incidental effects of them, are, in fact, part of their intention. This view is so far an improvement on the former, that it attributes no imperfection to the Creator's work, and assumes that His care has extended to all His creatures without exception; but still it removes him from any immediate connection with us.

The third supposition is, that the Creator rules the world by an ever-present superintendance. He acts by general laws, not only because such laws are the best possible, but because men could not carry on the business of life, if the laws were not universal. If fire sometimes threw out heat, and sometimes did not; if the sun rose at uncertain hours and so forth, the whole world would be thrown into confusion. But we do not consider that a judge has vacated his proper office, because he judges according to law and precedent; and, therefore, the regularity with which the Deity acts is no proof that he does not act at all. We may conceive, however, that he influences and changes certain things beyond our range of vision, whereby a series of events is set in motion producing extraordinary effects, though apparently in an ordinary manner. Such influences may also be exerted on the human mind, and thus originate extended human action. "The Lord stirred up the spirit of Cyrus," 2 Chron. xxxvi. 22. We learn from geology that at various times the Creator has produced changes in the condition of the world; and this fact, while it takes away all *a priori* objections to

Digitized by Google

miracles, takes away also any improbability in supposing, that he personally superintends the operation of his own laws, of which he is the master, and not the slave.

It is an error to infer that where means can be pointed out, the exertion of the Divine will is rendered improbable. Men carry out their intentions by means. Why should not the Creator do the same?

There are, no doubt, considerable difficulties as regards the subject of prayer. Men when in trouble seem, almost instinctively, to turn to the Almighty, and ask his aid. However carefully and judiciously they may have laid down their plans of life and lines of conduct, it is impossible for them to foresee what plans others are at the same time laying down, and in due course these several lines impinge upon and cross each other, so as to derange the best concerted schemes, and man feels himself in practice almost as incapable of controlling the future, as though everything were fortuitous. This feeling produces dependance on the Supreme Being, and incites to prayer. Now, though we know by experience that prayers are not always granted, yet we can scarcely suppose that the instinctive feeling of the whole human race should be utterly at fault. Prayer foreseen by the Creator, may be answered by a pre-arranged order of things, thus wicked plots may be providentially discovered by means appointed to be used, just as those plots are ripening into action. But it is indeed fortunate for us that prayer is not always answered. The author of the well-known Greek epigram prays that whatever injurious thing he asks for may be

Digitized by Google

denied, and that good may be accorded to him even when he knows not how to ask it. And Juvenal:—

> Nil ergo optabunt homines ? si consilium vis,
> Permittes ipsis expendere numinibus quid
> Conveniat nobis, rebusque sit utile nostris—
> Nam pro jucundis, aptissima quæque dabunt Dî.
> Carior est illis homo quam sibi; nos animorum
> Impulsu magno, cæcoque cupidine ducti,
> Conjugium petimus, partumque uxoris, at illis
> Notum qui pueri, qualisque futura sit uxor.

Many men in reviewing their lives, feel satisfied that on various occasions, Providence has specially watched over them, and perhaps, at times, prompted them either to do or to forbear. They also reflect, that many of the most important events of their lives, such as their permanent occupation and place of residence, have sprung not so much from their own deliberate choice, as from circumstances apparently trivial and accidental; and that the great changes recorded in history have frequently had no other visible cause. I cannot but think with astonishment on the mode by which Australia has, in our own time, been suddenly changed from a desert into a populous country. The gold lay there from the beginning. Men walked over, but they saw it not. But when the fulness of time had come, these wonderful treasures were laid bare, and the destinies of that extensive region entirely changed; and after ages will probably be able to trace, in these events, greater ends than we can now anticipate.

Again, without coal, England would be nothing. Yet this coal was formed and deposited long before the present England existed, and (if I may be allowed to repeat a sentence from a former work), when we

Digitized by Google

reflect on the inestimable value of this source of our comfort and prosperity, and consider the wonderful manner in which the productions of the antediluvial world have thus been stored up and preserved to the present time, we are carried back, and feel ourselves personally interested in the affairs and transactions of the remotest ages, and justly conclude that the whole universe is but a single and undivided plan.

The doctrine of a superintending Providence is perverted when men call upon God to exert his power, while they neglect the means which he has put within their reach. Hence I cannot join in the approbation which some Plymouth brethren bestow on those who have discontinued their life assurance, on the ground that in thus providing for their families they were distrusting the Almighty. All providences, not miraculous, come by ordinary means, and even many of the miraculous ones are stated in Scripture to have been effected by the same. Instance the East wind appointed to dry up the Red Sea. He who believes in Providence, is as diligent in the use of lawful means as he who does not. (Vide Nehemiah iv. 9, and Matt. iv. 6, 7). The difference consists in their feelings. The one considers himself walking always in the presence of the Father; the other lives without God in the world.

Are there any beings intermediate between God and man? Reasoning from analogy, and observing the insensible gradations by which created things rise, from the rock to the plant, and from the plant to the animal, and fully admitting, at the same time, the infinite distance at which the Creator must ever

Digitized by Google

remain from his highest creatures, we still think it extremely improbable that man, so imperfect and so vicious, should stand immediately next to God.

On the nature and attributes of invisible and superior intelligences, whose very existence we believe only from inference, there has been, as might have been expected, much diversity of opinion; but an equal diversity exists with regard to man himself and the visible creation, of which he forms a part.

Some have even denied the existence of matter; but dismissing such reveries, we will consider matter as a substance, the object of our senses, in which are always united extension, figure, solidity, mobility, divisibility, gravity, and inactivity. Of such mere matter the substance of the world is composed; and from examining meteoric stones, whose origin is probably extra-mundane, and also from the motions of the planets and an analysis of their light by the prism, we infer that matter exists throughout the universe.

Of this matter are composed the bodies both of plants and animals, dissociated for a time from their kindred dust by the mysterious agency of life. Under the influence of this principle, the individual is separated from its parent, and commences an independent existence; it receives nourishment, grows to maturity, withers and dies. Such are the obvious phenomena of life, but its nature and essence are hidden from our view by an impenetrable veil; no one can explain its numerous wonders, as, for instance, how the living muscle is enabled to raise a weight which would break a dead one. We can only refer the whole to the immediate breath of the Creator.

Digitized by Google

From personal observation, and also from the testimony both of history and geology, we are led to believe in the fixity of species, that is to say, that every animal and plant has originated from an animal and plant essentially similar to itself — that the seminal variations are trifling, always within narrow limits, and that there is a continual recurrence to the original type. And as we know from geology that every existing and extinct species had a beginning, we presume, in the absence of proof to the contrary, that the original parents were created with the various natures of their descendants.

In opposition to these views it has been asserted that, under the influence of electricity, animals of a low order, as acarus, are brought into existence without a parent; and further, that seminal varieties may, in a succession of generations, so far diverge from their original types as to become new species; thus creation is daily going on, and changes progressing in the organised beings so created. From the lowest order of animals, after a lapse of ages, even the highest might be developed, and man may own as his remote progenitor a reptile, or even a plant.

As to the spontaneous generation of acari, the proof appears to me wholly insufficient; but as regards the gradual changes which may take place among seminal varieties, and the possibility of some of these varieties becoming permanent, there need not, I think, be much question; though how far the divergence can proceed is a point on which few would like to hazard an opinion. This development theory, of which Darwin is the great modern expounder, has certainly enabled me to conceive, what formerly

Digitized by Google

was a great puzzle—how or why plants of genera exclusively tropical were found on the tops of mountains situated indeed between the tropics, but enjoying a temperate climate, while similar plants were never found in the temperate latitudes. Now, we have only to imagine that seedlings from a tree in the low country gradually spread up the hill; after some ascent, the climate becomes sensibly colder; many seedlings perish, but a few more hardy survive, and their progeny are able to ascend a hundred feet higher still. The same process continuing through a lapse of ages, the tree is found at last at an elevation of several thousand feet, but so changed in aspect as to appear not a mere variety, but an absolutely different species. Such a transformation is indeed possible, nay, perhaps probable. With somewhat more difficulty we might suppose an animal with a short proboscis like the tapir, coming into a country where the trees were somewhat stemless, and consequently affording sufficient food only for those who could reach it; in this way we might imagine the elephant and his long proboscis at length developed, but though we may thus account for changes of configuration where they are necessary for existence, yet we can hardly suppose the gaudy plumage of the peacock to have been produced by any natural selection, or explain how the different sexes originated. While, therefore we cannot accept the theory, unless it be in some of its minor points, we cannot, as many have done, condemn its supporters as atheists; for it seems to me to presuppose in the Creator at least as much foresight and design, as the ordinary belief of His having instantaneously peopled the earth. "He

Digitized by Google

spake the word, and there came all manner of flies," may impress us more with our own comparative want of power, but surely the development of the speck-like egg, first into the dull leaf-eating caterpillar, and subsequently into the nectar-loving and gorgeously painted butterfly, is as great an exemplification both of intelligence and of might.

Though plants exhibit sensibility, growing in the direction of light and moisture, and in some remarkable instances contracting when touched, yet we conceive that they possess no conscious feeling. And the same opinion seems equally true as regards the very lowest members of the animal kingdom. Lowest, be it remarked, only in respect of certain attributes, but equally well fitted for their respective spheres as other more gifted animals. As we rise in the scale, we gradually see better marked indications of sensation and volition—a nervous system—a brain—thought and reflection, which find their highest development in man.

Few have been satisfied to treat man as a simple entity, but there is some diversity of opinion as to the most accurate mode of dividing his complex nature. The Apostle separates it into three parts; body, soul, and spirit. A ternary division was frequent among the Greeks and Romans, who speak of the body, the intellect (*νους*, *φρην*, animus), and the spirit, (*ψυχη*, anima). This last includes both what we usually term the soul, and also the principle of animal life. Hence it arises that the word *ψυχη*, is used in the New Testament indifferently for either, and must be understood according to the context. In the present day, a binary division of man is more

Digitized by Google

generally accepted. He is looked upon as a compound of body and soul; the functions of animal life being regarded as a mere incident of the former, and the intellectual faculties as a part of the latter.

It is believed, then, that man has an immaterial soul, which thinks, and prompts to action, which is capable of a separate existence out of the body, and which, when once created, is eternal: That other animals have no such souls, and that their movements arise entirely from instinct—a principle, which like life itself, is known only by its operations.

If then the workings of the human mind, and the actions thereby prompted, be under the immediate guidance of an immaterial and eternal soul, while the instinctive motions of animals have a different origin, it would seem an easy matter to discriminate between instinct and reason, more especially as man himself sometimes acts instinctively, and therefore has a personal and experimental knowledge of both. Let us then investigate the subject.

Instinct is a natural propensity, prior to experience, and independent both of reason and instruction. It prompts to actions in immediate respondence to certain innate sensations, without any *intentional* adaptation of means to ends. It is superior however to human intellect in the certainty of the means employed, in the uniformity of its results, and the perfection of its works. It seems, however, confined to physical ends only. In rare cases, it is deceived, as is seen by the moth fluttering towards the candle, and by the fly being entrapped by the Dionœa muscipula.

Man in gaining a livelihood acts from reason; but

Digitized by Google

the ultimate result of his industry—namely, the benefit of society, seems designed not by him, but by Providence, and in this respect he acts as instinctively as the bee. Thus we see even reason guided by a higher power, and as a striking illustration of this fact, we find the two million inhabitants of London daily supplied with food of their own choosing, by persons who have no regard for their welfare.

On the other hand we often see in animals endowments corresponding with what we term intellect in man. Every book of natural history teems with anecdotes illustrating this position. The dreaming of animals shadows forth an intellectual nature. The sagacity of the dog and elephant manifests itself in a thousand ways. The deliberate manner in which the spider repairs its web, or abandons it when the task is hopeless, is exactly analogous to human conduct under similar circumstances. Animals make known to each other their wants, they combine with each other for specific objects, and finally they exhibit passions, as love, hatred, vanity, jealousy, obstinacy, shame, and even consciousness of guilt. And if this last be resolved into a fear of punishment, it may be said that a similar fear is the chief preventive of crime even among mankind.

When we compare man and the higher vertebrata with the lower, we gradually lose indications of intellect and will, and see a predominance of instinct. These principles vary inversely. In the human infant and idiot, instinct alone appears. As the infant matures, intellect dawns, is gradually developed, and finally takes the lead.

Digitized by Google

It is possible that instinct may first have taught some things which are now objects of experience, as speech and the use of fire. It may also be remarked that instincts of self-preservation are more perfect than social ones, such as language, which require intercourse, instruction and experience.

From the foregoing observations we conclude—1st. That there is a difference between instinct and reason. It may not always be possible to draw the exact line of demarcation, but in comparing a well furnished human dwelling with the carefully finished bird's nest, we see the different results produced by the two principles. 2ndly. Animals possess intellect less developed than in the adult man, but more developed than in the human infant.

If such be the case, we must, as regards animals, suppose either that their intellect, or what appears such, is nothing more than a direct manifestation or working of the Divine power, as expressed in the aphorism—"Deus est anima brutorum;" or that animals have an independent immaterial soul, whether the same be perishable or eternal; or lastly, that their brain, a mere material substance, has the power of thinking. The adoption of any one of these suppositions leads us into some serious difficulties. We will notice only those which arise from the last.

If thought, in other animals, be a mere function of the brain, why, ask the Materialists, should we seek any other explanation of thought in man? They further adduce, in support of their views, the following arguments:—1st. Our total ignorance even of what we mean when we speak of an immaterial substance, appears from the fact, that no one has

Digitized by Google

ever assigned to such a substance any one positive attribute. Every definition is confined to negatives.

2ndly. At what period of its existence does the embryo or infant first receive this immaterial guest? It is clear that in earliest childhood, there are no signs even of its existence. Again, in old age, it gradually decays. After a contusion of the brain, it seems totally dead. In the idiot, it has never awakened. Surely these are not the marks of an ever-living soul, allied to the Creator, but rather of a vital function of the brain, which operates with an energy proportioned to the perfection and vitality of the organ. It is admitted by Spiritualists, that the soul manifests itself through the agency of the brain, but they adduce no proof whatever of the existence of the soul, when the brain is incapacitated from action, whether by disease or during sound sleep.

3rdly. Cicero's chief argument for the soul is drawn from dreams. But modern physiology shows that we dream only during imperfect sleep. In a case which occurred in a Montpellier Hospital in 1821, Dr. Perquin was enabled actually to see a patient's brain in vermicular motion during a dreamy period, and quiescent during sound sleep. The flights of fancy in dreams, and the apparent reality of the objects imagined bear a marked analogy to the mental condition of the insane. Dreams, being created by our own minds, never seem extraordinary, and the rapidity with which we pass over varied and distant scenes often gives us an exaggerated idea of the time occupied. When we are in a sound sleep, ordinary external impressions do not disturb it. Extraordinary, arouse it. Intermediate, partially

Digitized by Google

affect it, not only causing dreams, but giving them character and direction.

4thly. If the soul can exist out of the body, ghost stories are, of course, possible. And if any one of these numerous stories can be authenticated, the question is at an end. All candid Spiritualists admit that the great mass of them are unworthy of credit; some proceeding from misrepresentation, some from ignorant credulity, and others from mental delusion. A striking example of the last-named was witnessed by myself. But they assert that after deducting all such cases, there remain some which have never been explained away. Moreover the belief in supernatural appearances is diffused over the whole world. To all this, Materialists reply that having examined so many tales, and found them baseless, they are not inclined to hunt any longer after an *ignis fatuus*. That men are accustomed to call everything supernatural, which their present knowledge does not enable them to explain. A savage considers thunder to be the direct voice of God. We now explain it to arise from the concussion of air. Further, the trivial nature of the communications usually made by supposed ghosts is a great argument against their reality.

5thly. If the mind be distinct from the body, we can hardly suppose it to influence the latter without volition. But it does so influence it, as may be observed in the suffusion of the cheeks in blushing, in the disturbed motion of the heart through fright, and in the loss of appetite on hearing bad news. On the other hand, we find the state of the body exerting a tyrannical influence, not only over the intellect, but often even

Digitized by Google

over the moral nature, inducing irritability of temper, particularly in gout and some other complaints. Take also the case of insanity from inflammation of the brain.

6thly. The inferior races of men, such as the Veddahs of Ceylon, and the Bosjemans of South Africa, are so little, if at all superior to other animals, that if the whole of mankind were like them, the existence of an immortal and immaterial soul would never have been even suspected. And when we compare their external configuration (or even our own) with those of the higher tribes of apes, and consider how little has been brought forward by those anatomists who have laboured to establish some marked difference, we are naturally led to doubt whether apes and men can be separated by any wide interval, and feel mortified at finding Simia quam similis, turpissima bestia, nobis. It has been assumed by many that even savages are distinguished from other animals by improveable and progressive reason, but it seems still doubtful how far the most abject of them could be raised.

Although it will be found that materialists generally deny a future state, yet a belief in such a state is not incompatible with their doctrines. For, if thought be an attribute of our present body of humiliation, there is surely no difficulty in conceiving that it may also be an attribute of a future body of glory. On the other hand, the immateriality of the soul affords us no proof of its indestructibility, though such a consequence is generally considered self-evident. Surely a Creator can destroy his own creations.

Digitized by Google

In order successfully to oppose the views enunciated above, it is necessary to show that man is not simply the most intellectual of animals, but that he possesses peculiar endowments of which animals have no share. And in order to judge of man, we must contemplate him as fully developed in a civilised community, even as in describing an oak, we should select our specimen from a noble tree, growing in a congenial soil, and not from some stray seedling, which had sprung up on stony ground, and was already perishing from lack of moisture.

Although we should scarcely draw any conclusive argument from the mere configuration of the body, yet we may remark that the erect carriage of man leads us to think of him as a being destined to look above the earth. Sunt enim e terra homines, non ut incolæ atque habitatores, sed quasi spectatores superarum rerum atque cælestium, quarum spectaculum ad nullum genus animantium pertinet (Nat. Deor. II. lvi). The general dominion which man exercises over the earth seems also to point out some essential superiority. Nos campis, nos montibus, fruimur: nostri sunt amnes, nostri lacus: nos fruges serimus, nos arbores: nostris denique manibus in rerum natura quasi alteram naturam efficere conamur (*Ibid.* lx). Some of the principal causes by which this dominion has been acquired may be worth enumerating. First, there is the instinct for clothing, by means of which our natural warmth is husbanded, and man enabled to people almost every part of the globe. Secondly, there is the peculiar conformation of the human hand, without which we could have done but little. Thirdly, there is articu-

Digitized by Google

late speech, which not only perfects our social life, but enables us to hand down our discoveries and sentiments to posterity. Each generation starts from a vantage ground; they commence where their ancestors left off. Thus progress is the watchword of mankind, while the animals of to-day are virtually the same as their ancestors of old. It is singular that the faculty of speech does not arise from any peculiar conformation of the organs, for parrots and some other birds articulate as distinctly as ourselves. Fourthly, the advantages of speech have been still further extended by the invention of writing, particularly alphabetical writing. We thus hold converse with the wisest and best of mankind, though separated by an interval of two thousand years. Fifthly, the invention of the Arabic (or more properly the Indian) numerals, and the use of coined money, have tended more to the progress of the human race than at first sight would be suspected.

The use of fire is peculiar to man, so are both agriculture and commerce. He seems also to be the only animal capable of forming abstract ideas, or of laughter. But if we wish to put the superiority of man upon a firm basis, we must look to the capacities of his moral nature; if there we find the recognition of the Creator, an admission of the duties flowing therefrom, and of moral accountability, we have surely found in man what we can find nowhere else. Moreover, the capabilities and aspirations of the human soul are so much beyond their possible exercise on earth, that we may reasonably expect their employment hereafter in a sphere

Digitized by Google

better suited to their developments, where the restless and fruitless pursuit after happiness may be exchanged for its enjoyment. Again, the very belief in eternity, so widely diffused as to be almost universal, is in itself a great argument for the truth of the doctrine, as also for the nobility of the soul, which thus deems itself not unworthy of eternal life. Can we believe that the sublime intellect of Plato is extinguished for ever, or that those loved ones of our own circle who have gone before us are sleeping an eternal sleep. That—

ανηκοοι εν χθονι κοιλη,

Ενδομες ευ μαλα μακρον ατερμονα νηγρετον υπνον.

Ad altiora, mihi crede, nati sumus. Inest in animo, memoria rerum innumerabilium, et ea quidem infinita. Inest conjectura consequentium, non multum a divinatione differens. Inest ad humanam societatem justitiæ fida custodia. Inest denique in perpetiendis laboribus, adeundisque periculis, firma et stabilis doloris mortisque contemptio (De fin. Lib. ii., c. 34). Nor can the separate existence of an immaterial soul be considered incredible by any one who admits the existence of a Deity. Even some terrestial agents, as light, heat, and electricity, are not included in the ordinary definition of matter.

It may perhaps be thought that the arguments here adduced are not altogether so conclusive as could be wished upon such an all-important subject, and I must confess that, in reading the Phædo, I have always felt that the convictions of Socrates seemed to outrun the proofs on which they were founded. If men in general had anything more than a vague opinion or hope upon the subject; if they

Digitized by Google

had such a belief as really influenced their thoughts and lives, we might fairly conclude that since they were instinctively led to prepare themselves for a future life, such a life was actually in store for them. Thus the bird, anticipating the future, builds its nest, and the silkworm prepares its temporary tomb. But facts most clearly evince how slight is the hold which a future life has upon the mind; death is often looked upon rather as an eternal sleep than as the gate of life, and the corpse as something more than the shell of the liberated bird. Men are, indeed, loth to drop altogether the hope of a future, but they seem to expect it rather for their departed friends than for themselves. How doubtfully does Tacitus express himself—Si quis piorum manibus locus, si, ut sapientibus placet, non cum corpore extinguuntur magnæ animæ; placide quiescas, nosque domumque tuam ab infirmo desiderio ad contemplationem virtutem tuarum voces. Quicquid ex Agricola amavimus, quicquid mirati sumus, manet mansurumque est in animis hominum, in æternitate temporum, fama rerum. Nam multos veterum, velut inglorios et ignobiles, oblivio obruet. Agricola posteritati narratus et traditus superstes erit.

The only proof of a future life which has ever appeared satisfactory to my mind is that drawn from the resurrection of our Lord. It is on this ground alone that the apostle builds his argument in 1 Cor. xv. v. 12, 16, and life and immortality are elsewhere declared to have been brought to light by the gospel.

The immortality of the soul may have been believed by many nations, though without sufficient

Digitized by Google

proof, but the resurrection and subsequent immortality of the body is a doctrine peculiar to Christianity, though shadowed forth in a few passages of the Old Testament, as Dan. xii. 2, and Psalm xvii. 15.

The next question that engages our attention is the period which has elapsed since the creation. The materials which we have are, first, historic, as the cosmogony of Moses, and the monuments of Egypt. Secondly, the testimony of geology.

Various ancient nations, as the Egyptians and Chinese, have claimed for the world a remote antiquity. The Hindoo books further assert that there have been creations and destructions innumerable, the Deity performing this as if in sport, after lengthened periods, for the sake of conferring happiness.

In Christendom these opinions were, till lately, treated as simply childish, and about 6,000 years were considered as the ascertained age of the world. Geologists showed conclusively that a much longer period was required, but their facts and arguments were either denied, evaded, or ridiculed, and they themselves, like the astronomer Galileo, considered as heretics. Time, however, has in both cases proved the parent of truth. The daily accumulation of geological facts has at last compelled all liberal-minded theologians to accept them as authentic, and in many instances to become geologists themselves. Their only endeavour now is to reconcile the undoubted antiquity not only of the solid globe, but of organised nature, with the statements of Moses.

There are but two modes of reconciliation which

Digitized by Google

now find favour with the public. The first is that of Dr. Buckland, which supposes (what may readily be admitted) that a vast interval occurred between the first and second verses of Genesis. That during this interval, various geological changes took place. That subsequently the whole earth was rendered void and desolate, and about 6,000 years ago a new creation arose in six days, as stated by Moses.

The theory here propounded is not without its difficulties. First, in what part of the geological series are we to place the Mosaic creation? The commencement of the tertiary period would seem the most satisfactory point, but unfortunately we feel certain that the tertiary period alone requires many times 6,000 years. That the world, even under its present configuration, is of immense antiquity, is proved by the distance which the Falls of Niagara have receded, wearing down a channel through hard rocks, and by the formation of the delta of the Mississippi, which has, on the lowest computation, already taken 100,000 years. If, again, we assign the present creation to some later period of the tertiary, we are met by the difficulty that in descending the series, we find recent genera extinguished only one by one; in fact, a gradually and not a suddenly altered state of things. Secondly, the extinct animals, who according to this theory lived before the Mosaic creation, had eyes, and no doubt enjoyed light. The extinct plants also required light. Are we to suppose, then, that light was first created and then destroyed in order to be created again?

These and similar difficulties have induced Hugh Miller and others to frame another hypothesis, or

Digitized by Google

rather to revive it, for in point of time it was proposed before Dr. Buckland's, and had fallen into disrepute. According to this second theory, the *days* of Moses are, in reality, periods of enormous length. The seventh day still continues. Having thus got rid of all difficulty as regards time, it asserts that the general order of creation, as detailed by Moses, agrees exactly with the geological sequence, and thus not only are the two accounts reconciled, but the testimony of geology becomes a positive proof of the inspiration of Genesis.

The chief objections to this theory are, first, that in thus extending the use of the word "day," an unwarrantable liberty is taken with the plain statement of Moses. Secondly, that the fourth commandment is built on the word "day" being understood literally. Thirdly, that though the agreement between the Mosaic and geological sequences be correct when looked at superficially and generally, yet it fails when carried out in detail.

There is one point, however, in which scripture and geology clearly agree, namely, that the last created animal was man. But how many years have elapsed since his creation? With this question another one is intimately connected, that is, did mankind spring from a single pair?

Physiologists generally are of opinion that, as there is no material anatomical difference between the various races of mankind, and as intermarriage between any of them produces a prolific offspring, they must all be considered as but one race, and the diversities between them attributed to external

Digitized by Google

influences, such as climate, food, &c., acting during a long period.

Observation, however, does not furnish us with any marked example of the force of such influences. The best that I know of are, first, the dark hue of the descendants of the Portuguese in India, though possibly here there may have been an admixture of Hindoo blood, and secondly, the gradually altering physiognomy of the inhabitants of the United States, notwithstanding the annual immigration from Europe.

On the other hand, we see in Eastern Africa the Abyssinian and Negro types co-existing, and showing no signs of fusion unless through intermarriage. Again, we see in Egyptian monuments, certainly dating more than 1,000 years before our era, delineations of negroes just as they are at the present day. Now, if we suppose the universality of the Deluge, we have but a comparatively short period between Noah and these Egyptian monuments, and yet within this period the different races of men became stereotyped.

Again, we find races so distinct, that centuries of contact do little for amalgamation. The weaker race, rather than fall into the social habits of the stronger, remain moodily at a distance, and finally become extinct. Such a process, on a large scale, has been witnessed on the North American continent. The same thing is taking place in Australia, and probably will take place in New Zealand. And this, be it remarked, in spite of vigorous efforts by Anglo-Saxon missionaries and others to change and elevate the aborigines.

Digitized by Google

In order to get over some of the difficulties of the subject, a theory has been started, supposing a Pre-Adamite race (the Negro and Tartar) who were not destroyed by the Deluge. In an ingenious work entitled "The Genesis, &c.," edited by S. R. Poole, it is argued that such a theory is quite consistent with the Pentateuch. "How," it is asked, "can theologians be contented to assert that the sons and daughters of Adam intermarried. Is it probable that the human race originated from so monstrous an incest? Admit other inhabitants of the earth, and the difficulty vanishes. Again, of whom was Cain afraid; of his brothers and sisters? And for whom did he build a *city?* Surely not for his own family alone."

With respect to the period during which man has inhabited the earth, the stone implements found in drifts, as also in caves containing the bones of extinct animals, the length of time probably required to produce the known varieties of language, and also the permanent varieties of race alluded to above, make many persons doubt whether the human period does not extend far beyond 6,000 years.

But waiving the question of chronology, let us consider what was man's condition when he first appeared upon earth. Was he civilised or savage?

Those who are in favour of a civilized origin consider that a certain number of men, forced, probably by war, left cultivated society, and adopted a forest life. That most of the arts they took with them, being unnecessary to their new existence, were gradually lost. That their nomad habits begetting turbulence, indolence, and above all, improvidence,

Digitized by Google

so degraded their character as to leave no germ from which civilisation could again sprout forth, unless, indeed, they came into contact with still civilised communities, who could teach both by precept and example. That, in proof of these views, it may be shown from history that savage nations have often been thus improved by contact, as the Britons by the Romans, while not a single instance can be produced where absolute savages have, by their own unassisted efforts, advanced in the scale of humanity. The New Zealanders appear to have remained for 127 years just as they were when first discovered in 1642. Finally, it would be unreasonable to suppose that a condition in which the finer and certainly natural attributes of the human mind were not developed, could be the original one. Can we imagine that the first created rose was unable to flower, or the earliest vine without its fruit? Our original parents must, therefore, have received divine instruction sufficient to raise them to a level far superior to savages.

That man originated in a savage state has been the favourite assumption of most philosophers. Believing that onward progress is the destiny of man, and observing that Europe is now advancing, certainly not from contact with any more advanced countries, but from an inward movement analogous to fermentation, they infer that, the further back we carry our investigation, the less civilisation can we expect to find. If we are to refer to the garden for analogy, we shall soon see that the crab-apple did not spring from the Newtown pippin, but the reverse. The earliest remains of man which are found in Western Europe prove, that in this part of the world

Digitized by Google

at least, the oldest inhabitants were mere savages, whose implements were all of flints.

"Civilisation" is sometimes used to denote human improvement generally; sometimes to mark those things which distinguish us from savages. Such distinguishing points, however, are not always improvements, as we shall soon have occasion to show. What, then, shall we say are the characteristics of a civilised nation. It has, in the first place, a government sufficiently well ordered to give ample security both to life and property. Such a government presupposes a people who are willing to support the law, and to render it obedience and co-operation. It is this habit of co-operation (so remarkably wanting in savages) which gives civilised man a personal interest in consulting the good of others, and thus identifies his feelings with theirs.

Progress also, is one of the signs of civilisation. The wishes of the savage are bounded by his immediate wants. In a civilised community, purposes are carried into a distant future; the great majority by the assistance of machinery, and by the division of labour, are able to obtain something more than is sufficient just to maintain existence. Part of the surplus is hoarded, and hence the nation annually becomes richer; the remainder is spent in obtaining present gratification. Animal pleasures are most suited to the general taste, and thus the merest luxuries of food become necessaries even to the lowest class. But those who have a larger revenue than can be consumed on eating and drinking, get a taste for furniture and other comforts, the making of which calls forth talent

Digitized by Google

and ingenuity in the workman, and thus elevates the mass. Then comes a perception of artistic form and beauty, such as prevailed in ancient Greece. A few higher minds employ their leisure in intellectual and scientific pursuits, which again react upon society. Superstitions decay. Discoveries are made by one man, utilised by another, and perfected by a third. The satellites of Jupiter are first seen through the first telescope. The astronomer is delighted at the sight. The public can scarcely sympathise with his joy. But wait awhile. These satellites have their use even to the public. Their occultations enable us to fix the longitude and position of every spot on the globe. Hence correct charts, safe navigation, and extended commerce. Thus, every man in a civilised community, whether he work with his head or his hand, is a stone more or less important in building up the commonwealth.

But besides increasing in mere material advantages, a civilised nation should be marked by moral progress, and by following reason rather than sensation and impulse.

> —Ingenuas didicisse fideliter artes,
> Emollit mores, nec sinit esse feros.

Towards civilisation, as described above, various nations have advanced by various modes, and on various points. When their advances have been made by lines not converging towards our own, we are too apt to look upon them as mere barbarians. Variations in form are mistaken for essential differences in substance and principle. Thus, in England, the natives of India and China are despised by the general public, who know little of

Digitized by Google

their outer, and nothing of their inner life, and North American Indians considered as mere savages; though in several points our customs are less reasonable than the Indian and Chinese, and even less polite than the North American—The latter people never interrupt a speaker, and it is singular that the imperturbability of countenance and manner which, like the Greek stoic, they preserve in the presence even of tortures and death, and consider as a manly conquest of the soul over the body, should be, in minor troubles at least, the peculiar mark of our very highest society. As an example—an English nobleman was dining with a friend many miles from home. A messenger arrived to say that his house was burning. The guests were deeply concerned, and the host asked if he should order his lordship's carriage. "No, I thank you," was the quiet reply; and without the slightest appearance of emotion, he added—"Before I could arrive, the house will be quite consumed; my presence would be useless. So I may as well finish my dinner."

What, again, does an Indian or Chinese think of some of our customs and practices. Read in the *Times*, August 21, 1863, a description of the horrors of vivisection, as practised and defended by the medical profession in Paris. In our own cities count the number of gin palaces, and reflect that the population of this country annually spend fifty millions in ardent spirits and tobacco. It is only within the present generation that habitual drunkenness has disappeared, even from our highest classes. Duelling, that most senseless and barbarous mode of settling a dispute, is still occasionally practised, and

Digitized by Google

a few years ago was quite common. Bull fights are the popular pastime in Spain. And what superiority of reason do we show in our general habits, our monstrous city feasts, our gaslit stifling rooms, the perpetual and absurd changes of fashionable costume, and the like.

What shall we say of Abraham, the father of the faithful? Was he not as civilised as Louis XIV.? Is the gilded coach of the latter to turn the scale in his favour? Does not the transaction recorded in Gen. xxxiii., viz., the purchase of the cave of Machpelah, exhibit, as regards all the parties concerned, (though some expositors have questioned the sincerity of Ephron), a state of manners, which would do honour to any age or country? We may turn also to the earliest times of Greece, and remark the courtesy, purity, nobility and general morality of Homer's poems, composed for and appreciated by a people who could then neither read nor write.

Civilisation, which, like heat, slowly penetrates the mass below, has not, as yet, gone to any great depth among the nations of Europe. The atrocities of the French revolution, and the minor violence of various riots which have from time to time taken place in England, show that in both these countries there exists a large body of idle, dissolute and rapacious men, to whom order, justice and good-feeling are but empty words, and who, repressed only by fear, are ready to upheave society and to plunder the industrious and wealthy, whenever times of political agitation give them a pretext, and the supineness of their fellow-citizens, joined to an inefficient police, affords them an opportunity.

Digitized by Google

Civilisation, though so highly valuable is, like all other goods, attended by some inconveniences, which must be considered as the price paid for it. From the principle of co-operation already referred to, the individual is gradually lost in the mass. The racy, natural and original character, resembling a rich fruit with a rough rind, is seen no more. The very existence of such a character, when brought on the stage, seems unnatural. We become the slaves of conventional habits of thought and action, and move along in solemn routine like a well-drilled regiment, under the command of the public. The mind becomes narrow and mechanical. Individuals feel themselves so utterly powerless, that they consider it necessary to attach themselves to some section in order to obtain even a hearing. Then comes party feeling, which blinds men to justice and truth, which prompts them to act with their own associates even when manifestly in error, and to vilify the motives and thwart every project which emanates from their opponents. When originality and individuality are lost, and no deviation from prescribed routine allowed, civilisation becomes stationary, as with the ancient Egyptians and modern Chinese. For the popular mind is incapable of originating anything great.

Another evil of civilisation is, that it produces and fosters a number of nervous and unhealthy individuals, and by the leisure which it affords, enables many minds to engross themselves with trifles, thus becoming the parent of men weak in all respects, mere artificial creatures, unable to display the sterner virtues, and plunged into dismay and misery, when the sound of war at their gates, or any fearful catas-

Digitized by Google

trophe awakens them from their dreams of silken repose. Such however need not be the result of civilisation. It was not so in ancient Athens, and is only partially so amongst ourselves.

A third evil attending superior civilisation and refinement in the upper ranks, for in no country does an equal amount fall to the lot of all, is that it dissociates men, rendering different classes intolerable companions for each other. Their habits and feelings are totally dissimilar, and thus an impassible barrier is raised between them. The ignorant and the rough man feels ill at ease in the society of the well-educated and polished, while the latter is disgusted at the rude manners and thoughts of the former. These disagreeable sensations arise from a consciousness that there is a relationship between the parties, which ought to bind them together, and this "ought" is found to be a practical impossibility. Hence a man prefers the society of his dog, or absolute solitude, to such company. The watchword of the present day, "More sympathy between poor and rich," is founded on a want of observation. No one is excluded from sympathy because of poverty. We hold friendly converse with a perfect stranger on the road, provided his habits be somewhat in unison with our own, without inquiring whether he has a balance at his banker's, or whether his property be the algebraic minus, less than nothing. The dissociation is not between poor and rich, but between the more and less refined. When we are in a foreign country, this feeling is modified in us, both by the different forms which vulgarity there takes, and by the curiosity with which we witness them, according to the

Digitized by Google

French proverb, "La vulgaritè ne se traduit pas."

The vulgarity, of which we speak, does not consist in the breach of mere rules of etiquette, in cases where such rules are confessedly conventional, but in an innate want of good taste, and an incapacity of distinguishing the fitting from the unbecoming— "The English lady's maid, decked in her mistress's left-off finery, contrasts unfavourably with the simple dress of a French peasant, costing little, but suited to her station."—And the coarse language of the London cabman, surrounded as he is by people speaking a purer tongue, proves that he is insensible to the superiority of the latter, and is consequently vulgar. These however are mere outward manifestations of vulgarity, and we shall better understand its nature by considering its opposite, gentility.

This is often hereditary, as in high bred horses— and we can all point to many a "fine old English gentleman," as a living example of what we mean— of intellectual culture, of high moral worth, and particularly of the strictest honour and veracity, he is most attentive to avoid hurting the feelings of others, and has instinctive tact to discover, when he is unwittingly touching upon tender ground. This tact presupposes the existence of a highly sensitive nature in himself, and consequent liability to suffer from the rudeness of others. If he appears somewhat reserved before strangers, it arises from his unwillingness to open his mind to those, who probably would not be able to comprehend him, or sympathise with his feelings. Though

Digitized by Google

seeking peace with all men, he will not brook intentional insolence. He is urbane, yet dignified; is moderate in the expression of his sentiments and emotions, and regulates all his actions by the canons of good taste.

The moral attributes of gentility, as here set forth, are founded in watchful philanthropy, and are not exclusively confined to any one class. There are nature's gentlemen among the poorest, while many rich, with all their advantages, have grovelling and vulgar souls. They have fastidiousness without judgment, superciliousness without dignity, and polish without sincerity. Their motto is Plus videri, quam esse.

Let us now enter upon another field, and investigate the sources and extent of human knowledge.

The general prevalence of some ideas, such as the idea of a Creator, has induced many to hold that they are implanted in us at birth, and thus innate. But those who assert this doctrine could prove it only by producing an individual who, never having had any communication with other men, or any other mode of receiving ideas ab externo, possessed them nevertheless. But to do this is, of course, impossible.

The better opinion is, that though born with instincts, feelings, and an aptitude to receive certain ideas, we have none innate. Our first impressions are from the senses. By these we learn isolated facts. Reason groups these facts together, endeavours to generalize them as axioms, and thus leads us to form more complex ideas.

In this way, the united action of the perceptive

Digitized by Google

and reasoning faculties enables us to increase our knowledge. But if every man had thus to work out every problem for himself, small would be his progress. From the weakness of his faculties and the shortness of his life, he is obliged, in most instances, to take propositions on trust, and not only to believe in the truthfulness of his informant, but in the care with which the original observer noted down the facts he witnessed, as well as the justness of the inferences, which he drew from them.

So entirely is sensation the origin of our ideas, that we cannot even imagine anything totally distinct from our own experience. What words can convey to a person who has never tasted it, the peculiar and luscious flavour of the mango. If we attempt to sketch a chimera, is not every limb and organ taken from some known animal. And if an inhabitant of the heavenly regions were desirous of giving us by description some present insight into the glories to be revealed hereafter, could he find words to describe them, or should we have intellects to comprehend them. Could he do more than simply state that they were such that eye had not seen, nor ear heard, neither had it entered into the heart of man to conceive.

Confining ourselves however to the things of this world, we say that the three sources of human knowledge are perception, reasoning and testimony; and a mere glance will convince us that each of them is liable to error. Even the senses, on which we place such implicit faith, sometimes mislead us. "I saw it with my own eyes," is generally considered sufficient to prove anything, but we have seen a

Digitized by Google

straight stick become crooked when partially plunged in water, and have the testimony of our own eyes that the earth stands still, while the sun moves round it. In these instances indeed reason corrects the illusion. But they prove that we must not only give up absolute belief in the testimony of our senses, but must admit that they may have deceived us in other matters, where the deceit still remains undetected.

But is reason, this corrector of the errors of the senses, herself an infallible guide? What we term reasoning is often nothing more than a sagacity in drawing inferences from uncertain analogies. We may possibly have nothing better to fall back upon, but no one would invest such loose conclusions with the character of infallibility.

But let us take reasoning in another sense, and define it to be the correct deduction of a conclusion from premises. Thanks to Aristotle, we can always compress such reasonings into a syllogistic form, and try their validity by certain rules. I consider that human intellect never achieved so great a triumph, as when that philosopher, having investigated the nature of all reasonings upon all subjects, unravelled the tangled thread, and by a happy generalisation showed that every valid argument might be reduced to a simple syllogism. Granted then that our process is perfect, and that we have carefully guarded against the ambiguities of language and the like sources of error. Yet we must recollect that though the conclusion may follow from the premises, those premises may themselves be unfounded; and here neither logic nor any other science can lay down for

Digitized by Google

our guidance unerring rules. And indeed no one can be absolutely certain of any proposition, unless he have a perfect knowledge of the subject matter. This we have in mathematics only. And the reason is, that the subject matter of mathematics, at least of the geometrical branch of it, being ideal, and having no existence out of our own minds, the conclusions which we draw, according to rule, from our own conceptions, must necessarily be in agreement with them, nor are they brought into rude contact with the outside world. There exists in nature, no doubt, a point, but a mathematical point, that is something which has no magnitude nor parts, neither breadth nor length, is merely ideal. And from this ideal point springs the science—or, if geometricians object to our placing its foundation in so airy a region as fancy, we can modify the statement, by saying that though a point has magnitude, yet in a mathematical point of view this magnitude is entirely disregarded, and the attention fixed solely on its position. But if we enter upon the investigation of mixed mathematics, where we are encountered by the realities of the material world, and perhaps also by some unknown disturbing causes, we are forced to content ourselves with mere approximations to the truth. In like manner when we lay down propositions on any subject, we are seldom able to take into consideration all the circumstances which may modify them.

We often err by taking as an axiom a proposition which contains indeed an evident truth, but which is, after all, but half the truth, or rather the truth looked at from one side only. Most proverbs, are of

Digitized by Google

this nature. To draw an illustration from a saying which is naturally very popular in this democratic age, and for which I have heard the author dubbed "the immortal Drummond," namely, "property has its duties as well as its rights."—Of the truth of this proposition there can be no doubt—Property, like every other talent, is a trust, and ought to be used aright. For this, the owners are accountable to God. But this view of the case does not suit the purpose of some who use it as an axiom. They wish to make the owners accountable to the public, and to bring them under stricter legislative control. But it is clear that if a man, by a day's labour, earns half-a-crown, and thus becomes possessed of some property, he has given to the public the full value of what they have given to him. The balance has been struck, and they have no further claim. And the case is not altered if we take the highest skilled labour. If a chief judge receives ten thousand a year, it is all his own. It is the price which the public agreed to give. And we instance property obtained by labour because labour is the chief foundation of property. Without labour, capital cannot be accumulated, and even land is valueless. If it is thought for the good of the community, that any stringent law should be directed against the security and undisturbed possession of property, let it be defended on that ground, and not on an axiom which, in the sense supposed, is not true.

As to the third ordinary foundation of belief, namely human testimony, we need scarcely be reminded how fallible it is, whether through carelessness or intentional misrepresentation. Few men are

Digitized by Google

capable of relating what they have seen, without mixing up their own inferences, and confounding them with the facts. Strict veracity is one of the rarest, as it is one of the most desirable of virtues. Among the ancient Persians it was highly prized, but few nations at the present day estimate it at its real worth, and those few are mostly of Teutonic or Scandinavian origin. They alone feel with Homer—

> Εχθρος γαρ μοι κεῖνος, ομως Αιδαο πυλησιν
> Ος χέτερον μεν κευθει ενι φρεσιν, αλλο δε βαζει.
> Il. IX.

Even among ourselves, falsehood is often condoned when it is not spoken either out of malice, or for any personal advantage. Thus, the patriotic mis-statement of the historian, the ambiguous and misleading expressions of the diplomatist, and the exaggeration of the traveller, whose chief desire is to astonish, are considered almost venial. But every high-minded man should be peculiarly watchful of himself in this matter. However light the falsehood, it is the "flake of soot."

As knowledge is the belief of what is true, upon sufficient grounds, it is obvious that if the only grounds be such as we have stated above, belief must often rest on slight foundations. Hence we might naturally have expected that men, despairing of truth and certainty, would have given up the pursuit altogether, and taken refuge in the hazy land of universal doubt. But so far from this being the case, Pyrrho has few followers. Wherever we go, we are met by positive assertions and decisive conclusions. Each man believes himself and his party in nearly

Digitized by Google

the exclusive possession of all truth. Hence the violence of politics, and hence the bitter enmities of so-called religious sects.

But without wasting time in this arid desert, where thorns are the only vegetation, let us turn to Athens, and to the founder of a far different school of philosophy. Desiring truth above all things, Socrates discoursed with various persons who professed to teach it, but soon found out their utter emptiness. Disgusted with their shallow dogmatism, he proceeded to investigate for himself the more important questions which pertain to the well-being of man. Deeply conscious how little real progress he had made, he told the world that the only thing he knew was the extent of his ignorance. Our own Newton, in the same spirit, compared himself to a child picking up a few pebbles upon the shore of the great ocean of knowledge. "And thus, in a corn field, we see the empty ears erect, while the fruitful ones hang down their heads." The Socratic dialogues are mostly negative discussions, intended to convince those who had adopted the commonplaces of current opinion, that their ideas had no precision, and that they had mistaken familiarity for knowledge. It was necessary thus to clear away the old unsound building, in order to lay the foundations of something better and more durable.

Plato in his three discourses, the Apology, Crito, and Phædo, has well pourtrayed the character of Socrates, as it stood forth in the prospect of death; and these discourses, while they serve as a noble monument to the master, do equal honour to the affectionate heart of the disciple.

Digitized by Google

After the departure of Socrates, his school was continued by a succession of great teachers, of whom Plato and Aristotle were the chief. They attempted to construct a more positive philosophy; but Arcesilaus, distrusting the certainty of any dogma, determined upon reverting to the less positive method of Socrates, and thus became the founder of a sect somewhat miscalled the *new* academy. Its followers flattering no passions and having no party zeal, have never been very numerous, but they may yet increase, and were never more needed than now.

The mode in which this sect carry out the principles they profess, may be best illustrated by the words of Cicero, himself a zealous follower of it. "We are not," says he, "of that sort whose mind is perpetually wandering in error without any particular object of its pursuit; for what could a mind or a life be worth, which had no determinate rule of thought or action. The only difference between us, and those who pretend to superior knowledge, is, that they call things certain, and never doubt the truth of anything which they maintain; whereas we consider those things rather as probabilities than as certainties. But these probabilities, though not perfectly comprehended, are quite sufficient to determine the choice, and govern the life of a wise man. Thus we preserve our judgment free and unprejudiced, and are under no necessity of defending what is prescribed and enjoined to us; whereas, in other sects, men are tied down to certain doctrines, as the oyster to the rock."—(De Off. 2, 2, De Nat. Deor. 1, 5, Acad. 2, 3.)

Our diffidence will be increased when we consider

Digitized by Google

the different opinions which have been held, even by men of superior minds, and by mankind generally in different ages, and by ourselves in different periods of our lives. Let us survey the various religions in the world, and the pertinacity with which they are all supported. And finally, let us examine our own cherished opinions, by reducing them to writing, together with the arguments upon which they rest, and considering what might be urged against them by an opponent.

Daily experience shows that probability is sufficient to lead men to action, and though we might wish for more certain knowledge, we must submit to this as well as other imperfections of our mortal state, and suppose that we have enough for our present need, or as the apostle expresses it (2 Peter, i. 3) *παντα προς ζωην και ευσεβειαν.*

Probability admits of all degrees. Commencing on the verge of certainty, it slides down to an even chance, and thence descends through improbability to impossibility. Thus, if we throw a die sixty times, the probability of once throwing an ace is so great as to be practically a certainty; five times is probable—ten an even chance—twenty improbable—fifty all but impossible. In such a case, we can estimate probability by calculation, but in the affairs of life we have much less certain data. And in nothing are sagacity and enlarged views more needed than in judging of the amount of probability. Ignorant people, over-credulous in some things, seem to think it a set-off to be sceptical in others; and the story of the old woman who could believe that Pharaoh's wheels had been fished up, but rejected with derision

Digitized by Google

the testimony of an eye-witness as to the colors of the dying dolphin, so far from being improbable, is precisely analogous to what we witness daily, and Hesiod has justly remarked, that too much and too little faith are equally injurious—*πισται τε και απιστιαι ωλεσαν ανδρας.*

If then the greater part of disputes arise out of matters only probable, and the disputants differ as to the degree of probability, they can scarcely come to any better agreement than to agree to differ. It will however often be found that disputes arise out of questions purely verbal, which are settled at once by defining the terms employed.

Probability may be grounded, first on common observation in like cases; secondly, on particular testimonies in this—and these two do not always agree.

Assent to probabilities may be evaded by the mind refusing to enquire, and simply hunting after excuses for unbelief. Also by assuming, without reason, that there must lurk some undiscovered fallacy in the arguments of an opponent, or that other arguments still more forcible might possibly be brought on the other side.

In acting, we have seldom any other alternative than either to do or to forbear, whether the probability on which we are acting be great or small. But we should still keep our minds alive to the real degree of probability, and thus possibly we may avoid, if not misfortune, at least disappointment. Evidence may be too strong for denial, and yet too weak for assurance. The weights may be lighter in one scale, but they are weights nevertheless. He only

Digitized by Google

is a lover of truth, whose assurance of any proposition is regulated solely by the evidence which supports it, and who, in coming to a decision, is no more biassed by his wishes than a traveller who asks his way in an unknown land.

The mention which we have made of the ancient philosophy, naturally suggests a comparison between that and the modern. It is frequently supposed that their chief distinction lies in the means used. That the ancients were careless of facts, and relied on syllogism, while the moderns are more solicitous in ascertaining the former, and have invented a new mode of discovering the truth, namely, induction. But, in reality (as Mill observes), the chief difference between the two systems, is in the end proposed. Plato aimed at exalting man to something like an image of God, and to make him, as far as possible, independent of material wants and pleasures. Bacon, on the other hand, sought to supply these very wants, and minister to these very pleasures. The former aim was noble; the latter more attainable. Its motto is utility and progress. A point which was invisible yesterday, is its goal to-day, and will be its starting point to-morrow.

From the diversity of the ends proposed by the two philosophies, arose the greater prominence given to syllogism in the ancient, and induction in the modern. It is quite a mistake to suppose either that there is any contrariety between the two, or that the one is capable of discharging the functions of the other. But the objects of the old philosophy did not require such careful induction as the modern, and therefore it was less carefully performed.

Digitized by Google

Let us now endeavour to learn something of the faculties of the human mind. Speculations on this subject long remained in so unsatisfactory a state, that metaphysics were regarded as almost synonymous with learned trifling. But we have to thank the phrenologists for a masterly analysis of complicated mental phenomena, and we may make use of their researches and classification, without at all committing ourselves to their peculiar views, as to every faculty acting only in its own particular portion of the brain.

According to the classification above referred to, the faculties, feelings, and emotions of the mind, for which we have no one comprehensive word, but which the phrenologists technically term *organs*, and consider to be above thirty-five in number, are grouped as follows:—

Perceptive faculties, such as size, form, and color.

Reasoning powers, as comparison and causality.

Moral feelings, as justice, benevolence, and veneration.

Social instincts, as love of children and friends.

Instincts of self-preservation, as caution, combativeness, destructiveness.

To determine, with absolute certainty, what are the primary faculties of the mind, is attended with great difficulty. We have two sources of information; our own feelings, and the feelings of others as evidenced by their speech and deeds. But still differences of opinion may arise as to whether a feeling is simple and primary, or whether it may not be resolved into others more simple still. Fear, for example, might either be considered a primary

Digitized by Google

sensation, or merely caution in a painful and unusual state of activity. Benevolence, again, may be looked upon as nothing but an active manifestation of sympathy excited and maintained by imagination, and this view may be supported by the fact that we feel more towards the higher mammalia, than towards reptiles, who less resemble us in their habits, and with whom therefore it is more difficult to sympathise.

The phrenological enumeration of faculties has been severely criticised by many adversaries. They object that there is no special organ assigned to memory. The phrenologists reply that this faculty is supposed to be only an incident of other faculties. Thus, where language is well developed, the memory of words is easy; where locality, of places. Yet we certainly do meet with persons who seem to have a general memory, and this appears to arise from the power of steadily fixing the attention on the thing to be remembered, and also from some peculiarity of the brain, which enables it to retain the ideas so fixed. As age advances, memory is one of the first faculties to decline. But it is not so with remembrance, or the act of calling up again an idea which memory has already stored away. Remembrance is greatly dependent on association of ideas, and thus it happens that we often, by mere chance, hit upon something which recalls a fact, which we had previously tried to recollect, but in vain. Teachers of artificial memory rely on impressing upon the mind an artificial association of ideas. But wonderful as their success is, there are those who, like the Greek philosopher, would prefer learning, if

Digitized by Google

it were but possible, the art of sometimes forgetting.

There is no human faculty which presents more extraordinary phenomena than memory, and this is our excuse for having dwelt upon it so long. A Welsh sailor, who had forgotten his native tongue, was wounded in the head. He spoke it again fluently, and lost the power a second time on convalescence. Maniacs, during lucid intervals, forget the thoughts of their delirious hours, but when again attacked, revert to them. It is the fixation of the attention which causes thought to fatigue; for where this is absent, as in the insane, thought runs on without weariness.

The opponents of phrenology further demand, with more or less plausibility, that several other faculties or feelings, besides memory, should be admitted into their catalogue, such as originality, or inventive genius, love of power, irascibility and others. We do not purpose to enter further into these discussions. It is enough for our present purpose to lay down the general proposition, that the mind, or if you prefer it, the man, has certain primary faculties; and that, by due investigation, these may, with more or less accuracy, be found out. Their presence is co-extensive with the whole human race. Quod semper, ubique, et ab omnibus. Those who are apparently devoid of any one primary faculty, may yet have the germ of it undeveloped, but if really and entirely destitute of it, they must be simply classed as exceptional individuals, like those who are born deaf and dumb. Others, again, who neglect the use of any faculty, may, in

Digitized by Google

time, almost lose it, and thus become mental cripples.

The principles of phrenology enable us to explain, what seems to those who have not studied the system, strange and inexplicable. That Thurtell, the murderer, should have been pronounced benevolent, appeared simply ludicrous. But why so? A man may commit a murder under the temporary excitement of destructiveness, but it does not follow that destructiveness is his most prominent organ. But granted that it was. If destructiveness be one faculty, and benevolence another, there is no reason why the same man should not possess both. Indeed, we all possess both.

Few actions take place under the guidance of any one faculty operating entirely by itself. We are generally impelled by a union of two or more, and follow the guidance of those faculties which either are absolutely the strongest, or which at the moment are the most active. A man with prominent benevolence, language, perceptive faculties, and love of approbation, would be likely to gratify all of them simultaneously, by giving lectures to a Mechanic's Institute. Benevolence, language, and veneration, again, would prompt to religious preaching. Benevolence and combativeness to opposing tyrants and rectifying public abuses; with destructiveness added, to hold up adversaries to scorn; if with wit, to ridicule. How the various organs thus acting either in concert or in opposition, and with various degrees of power, may originate almost every conceivable variety of human character, is shown in an interesting work by N. O. Fowler, of the United States

Digitized by Google

("Self Culture," Tweedie, Strand). These varied characters no doubt subserve the general scheme of providence, the deficiencies of one person being made up by the greater forces of another; the more active taking the lead in opposing and rectifying what is amiss; the more gentle preferring to exert themselves in aid of suffering humanity.

It has been asked which character is preferable; the active or the passive—the one which bends itself to circumstances, or that which bends circumstances to itself. We naturally prefer the passive, as giving us less trouble, but must remember that all improvement in human affairs is due to those who are not contented with existing things.

A determination of what are the natural organs of the human mind is not a matter of mere speculative curiosity, but one of practical importance, if we are correct in laying down as an axiom, that "Every natural organ is good," that is, when used aright. Let us take an example. I have seen the following sentence quoted as remarkably wise and profound—"Heaven is serious—Hell is serious—Should not Earth then be serious," which put into non-serious language means, there is no laughter either in heaven or hell, and therefore man ought never to laugh. Now, according to the axiom we have laid down, the only point for enquiry is, whether the propensity to laughter be natural to man. And as, by observation, we find that it is not only natural, but peculiar to him, we decide against our serious friend. In this way many similar questions may be settled.

Even those organs which are usually regarded

Digitized by Google

with suspicion, such as combativeness and destructiveness, are not only good, but absolutely necessary for forming a perfect character. Of this we have a remarkable instance in Eli. Pious towards God, affectionate towards his family, he yet wanted that stern decision which would have induced him, like Phinehas, to arise and execute judgment, and thus stay the plague. Surrounded as we are by evil men, some portion of combativeness is needed, for—

> Man spurns the worm, but pauses ere he wake
> The slumbering venom of the folded snake.

Nor is a fair amount of destructiveness less required, and this latter feeling perhaps helps to reconcile us to some of the sadder scenes, which we are obliged to witness in this perishable and changing world.

But does acquisitiveness—the love of money—the root of all evil—come under our axiom that every faculty is good if it be used lawfully. Ask what tills the ground, what supports commerce, what made the railways. Do we owe these things to benevolence, or to acquisitiveness?

That our lower faculties are liable to abuse, and require control, is generally admitted, but it often escapes notice that our very highest need the same discipline. Can we err then in giving way to benevolence? Certainly, by letting it run alone, without the guidance of reason, we may inflict on society a vast amount of evil. "We may sink a ship, by overloading it with gold." Let us take a common example, namely, relieving strolling beggars, because they look ragged and miserable. Are you not aware that by thus relieving them, you are helping to render rags and beggary profitable. Do you not

Digitized by Google

know that all these men might have decent clothes, good food and shelter in the union, and that they prefer begging, because it enables them to live more pleasantly. Are you not aware that the mass of beggars are mere lazy impostors, if not worse. And with regard to the defence, that if they deceive you, the sin is theirs and not yours, is it not your duty, when distributing your alms, which must necessarily be limited in amount, to consider yourself in the light of a steward for the poor, and to give the money where it will do most good. You are aware of all this, but you see a ragged man who tells a plausible tale. The sight is painful. Your sympathy is excited. To relieve both him and yourself you throw him a sixpence, and would fain think that you have done well.

Considering the varied chances of life, it is singular, but satisfactory to reflect how seldom we find an industrious and deserving person in pecuniary distress. David, who had been young and was then old, says that he had never seen the righteous forsaken, nor his seed begging their bread. So that it was an uncommon thing in Palestine, and any one, in the present day, may safely determine to relieve every such case personally known to himself, and not fear being called upon for any very onerous contribution.

That even justice may, in some cases, be strained too far, appears from the proverb, Summum jus, summa injuria.

But it is chiefly in regulating the emotions that watchfulness is required; and Plato, deeply convinced how readily the feelings may be excited by

Digitized by Google

poetry, refused to admit Homer into his educational course. He considered it dangerous to fill the mind with imaginary scenes, in which it becomes itself an imaginary actor, hurried along by tumultuous passions, far away from the calmness of philosophy. I need not add that there is much modern poetry, to which Plato's objection does not apply.

That each of us is born with a peculiar mental constitution, is evident from the fact that children, placed under exactly the same influences, manifest different dispositions, even from their earliest infancy. But a weak organ of the mind, like a weak organ of the body, may be strengthened by educational training and continued exercise, while the over activity of the stronger organs may be controlled. To do this is indeed the aim of all moral and intellectual culture.

The similarity, yet with variation, which the countenances of children bear to their parents, presents a striking analogy to the likeness of their minds. It is found by experience that the minds of children are frequently affected by any peculiar feelings, which were unusually active in the mother during the period of their conception and gestation. Sometimes the mind of the child, like its features, seems to resemble some collateral or distant ancestor more than its immediate parents. Talents usually follow the mother. Among animals, we have some curious instances of acquired habits becoming hereditary, as pointing among dogs.

In breeding cattle, we are very careful in selecting the parents, and endeavour to obtain offspring as perfect as possible. Into our own marriages considerations of a similar kind seldom enter. We pay

Digitized by Google

more attention to improving the race of oxen than of men.

There is one manifestation of the mind, namely, the Will, which presents some difficulty, as it seems to be not merely one of many faculties, but something more than even the arbitrator between them, when they prompt to opposite lines of conduct. It not only decides what ought to be done, but actually carries it into effect. It has some control even over thoughts. It seems to represent the whole motive force of the man. How the mind thus acts upon itself, and also on the material substance of the body is, of course, an insoluble problem. The suspension of the will seems to be one of the characteristics of perfect sleep.

We may however account for the principal phenomena of volition, without going beyond the faculties enumerated in the phrenological system. We may lay down as an axiom that men always act according to the then state of their emotions. If, for example, combativeness urges a man to act, and caution to forbear, all the other feelings being supposed absolutely neutral, then if combativeness be, at that time, more active and powerful than caution, the man will act. This is a case where the impulse is blind and resembles instinct. But if the man has powerful reasoning faculties; if causality shows him the consequences both of acting and of forbearing, and if comparison weighs these consequences, and decides in favour of forbearance, and the decision is further supported by firmness, then these three latter faculties, acting in unison both with themselves and with caution, form more than

Digitized by Google

a counterpoise to combativeness, and determine the conduct. And this determination is called the Will.

We must not omit to notice that men differ not only in the relative force of their faculties, but in their temperament. This is chiefly due to their bodily constitution. One man is spare, nervous, and highly excitable, but he has no sustaining power. Like a fire of shavings, he is bright and warm, but soon extinguished. Then there is the heavy man, apparently dull, but with vast latent force. His words at first seem hesitating and confused, but as his speech proceeds, the attention of his hearers is rivetted, and every phrase tells like a hammer. And lastly, there is the apathetic and phlegmatic man, on whom we will not waste words.

It is difficult enough to stimulate or control the faculties, but the temperaments being physical, are still more unmanageable. Nevertheless, even here, something may be done. A remarkable and most instructive instance of successful contest against mental excitability has been brought under my own notice, but for obvious reasons, I am precluded from entering into details.

The character is formed firstly, by the congenital constitution of the mind. Secondly, by precept and example, which may be termed the theoretical part of education. Thirdly, by the practical part, that is, by the actual exercise of the faculties, and acquiring habits, which become a second nature. It is further modified by the temperament, and also by old age and disease.

A perfect character must then have originally had perfectly well balanced organs; have been subjected to

Digitized by Google

perfect influences, and have adopted corresponding habits. But no one has a confluence of such advantages. Therefore no man is perfect.

Again, as man is a compound being, in order to perfection, his body must be perfect, that is, he must originally have received a sound constitution, and preserved it in vigour. But this is rare, at least in civilised life.

The laws which have been ordained by providence for the government of the world in general, and of man in particular, may be classed under the three heads of material, vital, and moral. I am aware of the cavil that has been raised at the word law being thus used in different senses, namely, as a property of matter, and also as a moral precept. But the meaning is clear enough, and we must let it pass "propter egestatem linguæ," if not "propter rerum novitatem."

Material laws regard material substances only, and the body of man, as material, is subject to their influences. If we fall from a ladder, a bone breaks, like any inanimate brittle substance which has received a similar blow.

The vital laws regard the vital functions, such as nutrition and bodily activity. Under their influence the broken bone, if well set, and kept quiet, takes on first an inflammatory action, then a healing process, and finally reunites.

The moral laws refer to man in his intellectual and moral capacity.

Every one of these laws is good. For good is its ultimate end, though perhaps not its exclusive principle. It may show forth the severity as well as

Digitized by Google

the goodness of God. But whatever objections may be made to the operation of any law, it is so far a necessity, that the abrogation of it would not only introduce confessedly greater evils, but entirely overturn the present state of things; nor can any one, even in imagination, construct a better system. Let us take a very strong case—What death can be more horrible than that by slow starvation? We will suppose it inflicted by tyranny, without any crime on the part of the sufferer. Now the law is that man cannot live without food and warmth. If this law be thought harsh and injurious, let us conceive it annulled, and man enabled to live both without food and clothing. The great stimulus to exertion being gone, all labour and activity would probably cease, and it is possible that, idle and unhappy, the human race might sink at least to the level of the inferior animals.

Every law is in harmony with the constitution of man, and so wonderfully suited to our present state, that notwithstanding some difficulties which we cannot solve, we may yet adopt the language of the judicious Hooker, and affirm that of law no less can be said, than that her seat is the bosom of God—her voice the harmony of the world. All creatures in heaven and earth do her homage. The least as feeling her care, and the greatest as not exempt from her power. Both angels and men, and creatures of what condition soever, though each in different sort and manner, yet with uniform consent and voice, admiring her as the mother of their peace and joy.

Every law is invariable in its operations. It admits of no exceptions whatever. Disobedience or

Digitized by Google

inattention to it is sure to be followed by hurt. Even ignorance will not avail us here. The law says, eat arsenic, and die. And the effect will be the same whether it is tasted out of ignorant and idle curiosity, or whether it is taken for suicidal purposes.

If then we are liable to suffer so severely even from the careless infraction of these laws, can we have a greater inducement both to study and to obey them. Thus only can we be said to live conformably to our nature. The better we understand these laws, the easier shall we avoid calamities, and thus knowledge will be found to be power.

If in the pursuit of some great object, we consider ourselves constrained by the moral law to disregard a material or vital law, the moral end will not save us from the penalty of the infraction. But we shall generally find that such infractions do not produce any moral good whatever. If a swimmer jumps into the water to save a drowning man, both are safe. But if one who cannot swim, acting under a sudden impulse, rushes in, he not only is unable to assist his fellow, but will be drowned himself.

That suffering under a material law implies no moral turpitude, might be learnt from the case of those, on whom the tower in Siloam fell; and a recognition of the fact that moral excellence has no power to shield its votary from violence and wrong, is implied in Virgil's apostrophe—

> ———————Nec te tua plurima, Pentheu,
> Labentem pietas, nec Apollinis infula texit.

But though these principles were partially admitted before, George Coombe may be considered as the first, who strove to convince the public, that every

Digitized by Google

law has its own independent action, and that heaven has no favourites, who can transgress even the smallest of them with impunity. This theory is capable of illumining many a dark place. Let us examine the following. A missionary, devoted to his work, bids adieu to his fatherland for ever. It happens that some wicked man, for some wicked purpose, sets out at the same time, for the same place, but in another ship. They are both overtaken by a storm. The ship of the missionary founders; the other is saved. On the arrival of the intelligence well-meaning but narrow-minded people are amazed. They discourse long on the profound mysteries of the divine government, and recommend humble adoration of its inscrutable decrees. Some, who are less firm in the faith, declare themselves tempted to disbelieve in a providence, which could thus leave its servant to perish, and preserve a villain. But our academic philosopher, before he draws any conclusion, thinks it best to make some enquiry. He learns that the ship of the missionary was known to be so unseaworthy, that no insurance could be effected on her. That the good man never asked about the ship, but was satisfied with hearing that the captain had taken the temperance pledge, and read out prayers to his men twice a day. The other traveller looked out only for a tight ship, and efficient crew. Now under these circumstances, the philosopher cannot see anything very mysterious in the fact, that when the storm beat hard, the strong ship swam, and the rotten one sank. Nor does he see any reason for murmuring against providence. The missionary knew, or might have known, the laws by which a

Digitized by Google

vessel floats. He was endowed with instincts of self-preservation, which were intended to induce him to make cautious inquiry before he hazarded his life on the strength of a single plank. Yet for a supposed moral object, he disregarded the laws of hydrostatics, and suffered the penalty. In this, as in most other cases, whatever a man sows, that shall he reap. If he sows to moral law, he must expect a moral, and not a material reward.

But what do objectors wish? Do they want an alteration in the laws of specific gravity, or do they think that providence was bound, in the case of the missionary, to repeat the miracle of Jonah; or do they forget that an early death may not always be a misfortune.

> Sæpius lachrymavit Priamus quam Troïlus—
> Vivere non diu, sed multum.

The due observance of the material and vital laws naturally leads to bodily health. How little they are attended to may be inferred from the general prevalence of sickness, and the early death of the majority. In these things, we suffer both from the errors of our parents and of ourselves.

When we consider how slight a physical cause, such as a heated room, or a gloomy day, may turn comfort into discomfort, and kindly feelings into bad temper, and thence deduce the fact that the mind is greatly, if not altogether, dependent on the body, and further, that the body is, equally with the mind, the work of God, and is, in this life, equally a part of ourselves, surely we cannot avoid the conclusion, that attention to bodily health is a positive moral duty. And when we throw it away either for gain,

Digitized by Google

literature, or ambition, we shall find too late that in securing the object of our pursuit, we have bartered away the power of enjoying it.

Υγίεια πρεσβιστα Μακαρων
Μετα σου ναίοιμι
Τὸ λειπομενον βιοτᾶς.
Συ δε μοι προφρων συνοικος ειης·
Ει γαρ τις η πλουτου χαρις η τεκεων,
Τας ενδαιμονος τ' ανθρωποις
Βασιληιδος αρχας, η ποθων
Ους κρυφιοις Αφροδίτης αρκυσιν θηρενομεν,
Η ει τις αλλα θεοθεν ανθρωποις τερψις,
Η πονων αμπνοα πεφανται,
Μετα σειο μακαρια Υγίεια
Τέθηλε παντα, και λαμπει Χαριτων εαρ·
Σεθεν δε χωρις, ουδεις ενδαιμων πέλει.

The material and vital laws we learn from observation and experience, and, by obedience, turn them to our own uses. We infer, when we receive evil, that we have transgressed them, and thus are led to discover their behests. But can we discover the moral law by the same process. Does the transgression of it always produce perceptible evil to the transgressor.

On this subject, different opinions have been held. Admitting that disregard of sobriety, and of other virtues which affect bodily health, is productive of unhappiness, some consider, that the temporal successes of bad men are so palpable and notorious, as to form an argument not only against all idea of a moral law, but even of a moral governor. Others, again, maintain that no man has ever increased his

Digitized by Google

happiness, even in this life, by any bad action; for if sin produces no other evil, it at least deteriorates the moral character, which is an evil in itself. St. Augustine holds a middle course, and says that some sins are punished here, lest it should be supposed there were no God, and some not, in order to prove a hereafter.

> Si quis apud Superos furto lætatus inani,
> Distulit in seram commissa piacula mortem.

It must be confessed, that in this, as well as in all discussions regarding the moral law, we cannot expect the same conclusive evidence, as we find with regard to the material. The latter deals with external objects, which are cognizable by the senses, and the principles of it may be tested at pleasure by well-chosen experiments. But virtue, conscience, and the like are more indefinite, and our reasonings upon them will consequently be less conclusive.

If then, we are unable to ascertain the moral law by the evidence of direct and manifest evil following the breach of it, whither shall we turn for instruction. Can man look into his own mind, and there find a teacher, a moral sense.

Many have denied the existence of such moral sense, and in support of their views point out whole nations who have, at different times, not only practised particular vices, but considered them not disreputable, or even laudable. Instance robbery among the ancient Highlanders and modern Arabs, infanticide among the Rajpoots, widow burning among the Bengalis, and suicide among the ancient Romans. They further argue that from the want of any moral sense in man, it became absolutely neces-

Digitized by Google

sary that he should be taught his duty by direct revelation from heaven.

The argument drawn from the allowed vices of various nations, seems to belong to that class of fallacies which are technically called fallacies of composition, and which may be thus exposed. The eyes of some individual (A) are rather too small; the complexion of another (B) wants clearness. C, again, is too short. And thus we might go through the whole human race, and see something defective in every one. But it would be absurd to conclude from this, that there was no such a thing as beauty. Again, the language of the people of Genoa has its provincialisms; so has that of Naples—even the dialects of Florence and of Rome are not irreproachable. But we must not hence infer that there is no such a thing as pure Italian, which as Dante truly observes, "in ciascuna citta appare, e che in niuna riposa."

That the nations of antiquity were not so ignorant of the moral law as the above argument supposes, may be proved by the direct testimony of St. Paul—Rom. chap. ii., 14, 15. The great end of revelation, so far as it regards morality, seems to be not so much to give information, as sanction; and rather to point out with authority the rewards and punishments, which virtue and vice are to receive hereafter, than to give any new or unheard-of definition of them.

On comparing the ethical works of various ages and nations, we find the same general principles laid down, and an attentive student may discover that even some of those precepts, which are generally

Digitized by Google

considered as peculiar to Christianity, existed elsewhere, long before the commencement of our era. In Manu alone, whose works date many centuries B.C., we find the command over the *thoughts* distinctly required (cap. xii., v. 10); an improper wish condemned as the crime itself (cap. ix., v. 21); patience under reproach and abuse inculcated; all hostility against any one forbidden (cap. vi., v. 47). The author of the Hitopadēsa, himself probably somewhat more recent than the promulgation of Christianity, quotes poets, who say, "even towards an enemy, hospitality must be exercised, as the tree shades him who is ready to cut it down" (Book 1). And, "He is truly wise, who considers all other creatures as himself" (Book 4).

The question was considered by Cicero, and thus decided (De Republica). Est quidem vera lex, recta ratio, naturæ congruens, diffusa in omnes, constans, sempiterna; quæ vocet ad officium jubendo, vetando a fraude deterreat. Huic legi nec obrogari fas est, neque derogari ex hac aliquid licet; nec vero aut per senatum aut per populum solvi hac lege possumus. Neque est quærendus explanator, aut interpres ejus alius. Nec erit alia lex Romæ, alia Athenis; alia nunc, alia posthac; sed et omnes gentes, et omni tempore una lex, et sempiterna et immortalis continebit; unusque erit communis quasi magister, et imperator omnium Deus. Ille legis hujus inventor, disceptator, lator; cui, qui non parebit, naturam hominis aspernabitur; atque hoc ipso luet maximas pœnas, etiamsi cætera supplicia, quæ putantur, effugerit.

As to the lenity with which particular vices have,

Digitized by Google

at different times, and in different nations, been regarded; some explanation may generally be found. A people, for instance, addicted to war, naturally places courage at the head of the list of virtues. Now we find that military courage, continually called into action, and habituated to scenes of bloodshed, generally induces a ferocity of character, and a disregard of the rights of property. Under such circumstances, the leading men of the nation are admired not for their ferocity, but for their courage and patriotism; but as this ferocity is found almost inseparable from such a character, it is regarded as a venial fault, or a necessary evil. But while cruelty is thus pardoned, or even thought justifiable, extreme indignation is shown against such vices as fraud and hypocrisy, which are the more natural concomitants not of courage, but of timidity. On the other hand, a nation, not of soldiers, but of traders, and one, moreover, which during many ages has been subjected to an oppressive government, passes a very lenient judgment against crimes of deceit. The people have found, by long experience, that falsehood and evasion have often saved them from plunder, and the national character has thus become gradually but permanently debased. The noble motto of Philip of Hesse—

> Besser land und leut verlorn,
> Als ein falschen eid geschworn,

Could hardly have passed into a proverb among the Italians of the middle ages. It is the sentiment, and not the German language, that convinces us of its having originated from principles, far different from those of Machiavelli. Let us, however, in passing,

Digitized by Google

pay a tribute of praise to the modern Italians, who without going through the ordinary phases of anarchy and military despotism, seem calmly determining to become a free nation, and are endeavouring (1864) to carry out the work with unusual moderation and dignity.

We must not however infer, from what has been premised, that man has that innate perception of what is right and wrong, as to be able to judge of it intuitively. Knowledge of the moral laws is acquired by instruction, observation, experience, and reason, and, when thus acquired, is enforced instinctively by conscience (*αισθησις*), which is one of the original principles of our nature. No principle requires more care in keeping it bright and unsullied. It is easily dulled by disuse, by being resisted, and by constant intercourse with the immoral. And as to the higher and more sublime aspirations of man, which perhaps we ought rather to refer to ideality and veneration than to conscience, we find, by experience, that they are plants of so delicate and exotic a nature, that they can hardly exist in the atmosphere of the ordinary money-getting business life.

There have been discussions as to the basis upon which the foundations of morality should be raised. Some have maintained that there exist ideas of every virtue, immutable and self-subsisting, and that actions are good in proportion as they resemble these archetypes. But this theory seems scarcely consistent with our views of the eternity and irresponsibility of the Creator. For there was a time when he existed alone. Nor could there have been a place for either

Digitized by Google

virtue or vice. When, therefore, the distinction between them originated, it originated from him.

We prefer then to found the moral law solely on the Will of God. We cannot limit his right of dealing as he pleases with his own. If he is our Ruler, we owe him obedience—if our Father, reverence—if our Benefactor, love. This argument has been objected to as a petitio principii; inasmuch as it first founds morality on the Will of God, and on our obligation to obey it, and then founds this very obligation upon the three moral qualities of obedience, reverence, and love. But it cannot be denied that the fear of punishment by a superior, and love or gratitude for favours received are original propensities of our nature, inasmuch as they are observed in children, who have no sense of duty. And if original propensities, then the foundation of these also is the Will of God; or in other words, the Will of God, acting through our instincts, calls upon us to obey the moral laws which he has enacted.

Further, we cannot suppose, that God will regard with equal favour, those who obey his laws, and those who neglect them. And if he be a rewarder of them who diligently seek him, attention to our own interests ought to urge us to follow the path which duty has already pointed out.

If those who hold that morality is an immutable something, independent even of God's command, are not yet convinced, we may propose to them a dilemma—Do you think that the Will of God ever differs from what is right? You can scarcely say "Yes," and if you say "No, but this arises from Justice being an eternal attribute of the Almighty,"

Digitized by Google

there is no practical difference between the two opinions, but only a different mode of stating them.

The subject discussed above scarcely affects the mere moral philosopher, except when he attempts to solve the problem of the origin of evil. For as he admits no authority but reason, he decides from reason alone what virtue is, and then affirms that such virtue must be the Will of God. From the very nature of this process, therefore, there can never be any contrariety between the two. But the upholders of every system of Revelation, whether of the Bible, the Korān, or the Vēdas, are continually attacked as follows: The Almighty cannot command what is wrong. But some commands in your book are wrong. Therefore the Almighty is not its author. To this, the supporters of the Revelation reply,—"This book is from the Almighty. Whatever he commands therein is right. Therefore the commands to which you object must be right, though perhaps it may be difficult to reconcile them to human reason." So far, so good. But when they go further, and profess to be horrified at the profanity of their opponents in "sitting in judgment on the Almighty," it is obvious that the profanity exists only in their own imaginations, since they have been assuming as their major proposition, the very point which their opponents deny.

Having now defined obedience to the moral law as synonymous with obedience to the will of the Creator, and having founded the obligation to that obedience upon the relations that subsist between Him and ourselves, let us consider what means we have of ascertaining that will.

Digitized by Google

We have seen that man has been created with certain powers and faculties, every one of which has its use, and if used aright is good. A man therefore, who thus used all his faculties aright, would be living conformably to his nature, and arrive at the highest point of virtue of which that nature was capable.

But in exerting our faculties, and following our innate propensities, we may err in two ways; either by excess (under which head we may class perversion) or by defect. Each of these is vicious, and hence it has been said that every virtue is a middle point between two vices.

Virtus est medium vitiorum, et utrinque reductum.

This position may easily be exemplified. To desire a reasonable remuneration for his labour—to dispose of his wages judiciously, partly on his own moderate sustenance, partly in acts of beneficence, and partly in providing for old age, when the power of labouring will be less, and the need of comforts greater; all this, by common consent, is admitted to be the part of a prudent man. We trace in it a certain desire both to gain, and to save, and to expend. It would be impossible to define by words the exact point at which these three desires would stand at a perfect equilibrium. Suffice it to say, that the social habits of the class to which the individual belongs, usually indicate some approximative standard. Where the love of money exceeds the standard in a slight degree, the man is described by his friends as over prudent; by his enemies as mean. If the passion proceeds still further, it becomes decided covetousness, or avarice, according as it manifests itself most strongly

Digitized by Google

in a desire to gain or a desire to save. Such is often the career of a man, who commencing with small means, and having had a hard struggle with fortune, is unable to relinquish in his latter days the habits acquired in youth; and which were then not only decorous, but necessary, though now quite unsuited to his altered circumstances.

Reverting to our central point, where we suppose that the virtues of frugality and liberality blend into one, let us follow the line in the opposite direction. First we have, inattention to gain, and general carelessness in pecuniary transactions. Hence losses on the one hand, and profusion on the other. These soon lead to utter ruin. Such is too often the downward progress of the heir, who born to wealth, thinks himself above all graver studies, and never learns the value of a guinea, until (as Poor Richard says) necessity forces him to try and borrow one.

Thus we might examine the list of virtues, and show how they shade off on each side into correlative vices. In some few cases indeed, the task might not be easy; either because the excess or defect which forms the vice, is too rare or inconspicuous to have acquired even a name, or because some virtues, as benevolence and justice, when regarded as isolated principles, seem scarcely capable of excess; though when their force drives a man into an unbecoming line of conduct, and entrenching on the proper province of other virtues, prevents the free development of the latter, it is clear that such unrestrained action partakes of the nature of vice. It may further be remarked that virtue is a relative, and not an arithmetical mean between two vices, and

Digitized by Google

therefore may approximate nearer to the least heinous.

We conclude this part of our subject with the following observations:—

1st. The opposite vices can scarcely co-exist in the same person—one vice preserves from another. Thus Arbuthnot says of Chartres, that he had every vice but prodigality and hypocrisy. "His insatiable avarice exempted him from the first, and his matchless impudence from the second." But though prodigality cannot co-exist with avarice, it may with covetousness, as the latter supplies food for the former. Such was the character of Catiline, Alieni appetens, sui profusus.

2nd. When men become convinced that their course is vicious, their repentance sometimes runs so fast, that unable to stop itself at the middle point, it rushes headlong to the other extreme. Thus a life of licentiousness becomes exchanged for ascetic rigours. Or, a sudden conviction of the emptiness of worldly pleasures makes men careless and apathetic. Dum vitant stulti vitia, in contraria currunt. The human mind, unless regulated well, oscillates, like the pendulum, from one side to the other. This is very plainly seen in the great movements of public opinion, which almost always tend to extremes. The present evil is felt, and relief is sought in something which involves the opposite one. But the ebb has scarcely ended, before the reflux begins. It is fortunate if the equilibrium is at last attained.

3rd. In order to discover the middle point where virtue resides, not only an intellect, but a well-trained intellect is required. Therefore it appears that

Digitized by Google

morality cannot exist without intellect, though intellect may exist without morality, as is conceived of the Devil. On the other hand, no one would apply the term virtuous to a fool.

Any one can be angry, but mere instinct will not teach a man to be angry only on proper occasions, and in moderation. Hitting the exact mark is difficult to any but the experienced archer, but it is easy enough to miss it. So again, as to finding the exact centre of a circle—or we may compare virtue to a perfect work of art, which will not bear either subtraction or addition. It need scarcely be remarked that in deciding casuistical questions, where we are ourselves parties to the suit, we must beware of sitting as bribed judges, and must send our desires out of court, even as the Trojan elders sent away Helen.—Il. iii. 158.

4th. If it be so difficult to find the exact point of perfect virtue, we must not be harsh in condemning those who are evidently close upon it. Where mathematical accuracy is impossible, some little diversity must be allowed. Possibly, we know not all the circumstances of the case in question; or perhaps our own judgment of the perfection of virtue may be somewhat inaccurate. At all events, let it not be said of us, Sincerum cupimus vas incrustare.

By the term duty (*το καθῆκον*, a word first used by Zeno), we mean that which is due to some one else. Now duties have been divided into those of perfect and imperfect obligation. The former imply a correlative right in some one to exact them, and consequently they are capable of being defined, and form the subject of justice. Imperfect duties, on the

Digitized by Google

other hand, as generosity, cannot be exacted, and as a man's own feelings are the sole judge of their extent and obligation, we need not add, that they are too often imperfectly performed.

In books of arithmetic, after working out a long sum, according to a tedious rule, there is often given some short process, by which we can test the accuracy of the result. Is there, in the investigation we are now pursuing, any analogous process, by which we may ascertain whether the act which we have pronounced virtuous, because it seems to be in harmony with the proper use of our faculties, be really so or not.

With respect to the duties which we owe to God, they are easily inferred from the relation He bears to us. As our supreme King, Father, and Benefactor, He rightfully requires from us all the affections of the heart, and implicit obedience. Nothing less is His due, and whatever falls short is sin.

In order to make the performance of these duties easier, veneration has been implanted in us as an original principle. But, alas, we must confess that the human heart is sadly alienated from God. No doubt there is some difficulty, with our imperfect faculties, of completely and continually realising the presence of an unseen Being, of seeing Him who is invisible; but we must seek for the true cause of alienation in a consciousness of disobedience, and a want of perfect conformity to His will.

With respect to the duties which we owe to our fellow men, there exists a test, by which we may examine them, namely, the test of utility, or as some term it, the greatest happiness principle, for it judges

Digitized by Google

actions according to the influence of them, and of the dispositions from which they emanate, upon human happiness.

Man is a social being, like the ant. So much so, indeed, that any one who can live in solitude must be either much above or much below the rest of his species. From man's domestic and social ties spring the various duties of which we are now speaking. Our actions, when not indifferent to society, may cause them either good or evil. Can we hesitate in deciding which is preferable? If happiness be a good to every individual, it must be desirable to the commonwealth. And therefore the action which most tends to promote general happiness (the happiness of the actor himself not being overlooked) must be the best, and therefore the most virtuous.

It is foreign to our purpose to interpret passages of scripture, but it may be observed that the principles just laid down, will solve the difficulty, which some have raised, as to the mode of carrying out the Christian direction of loving our neighbour as ourselves. How, they will ask, can a judge, who professes to believe this doctrine, condemn a criminal to die? What would be his own feelings if in the criminal's place? Now if the criminal alone were the judge's neighbour, the question might have some weight. But since every man is his neighbour, it is the interest of the general community that is to be consulted, and not the interest of the mere unit. I do not know whether erroneous views upon this point have assisted in producing that morbid sympathy for criminals generally, and for murderers in particular.

Digitized by Google

which unfortunately characterises our present age. No one would object to abolishing the punishment of death, provided, as Alfonse Karr wittily suggests, Messieurs les assassins are willing first to set the example. To desire that crime should be so certainly and severely punished, as to reduce its commission to the smallest possible amount—to consider the peace and security of the public the chief end of government—such should be the views of every good citizen. And when an atrocious criminal has been condemned, so far from desiring to reverse his sentence, we should say with Homer—

Ως απολοιτο και αλλος, οστις τοιαυτα γε ρεζοι.

Such are the feelings which have prevailed in most ages and countries, and the lex talionis, which Moses commanded (Exod. xxi. 24) would, in many places, still be considered just. And indeed from this general admission that crime should be followed by punishment, theologians often argue that as such punishment is frequently evaded on earth, it is reasonable to suppose that it will be inflicted hereafter. The animus puniendi seems to arise out of the instinct of self-preservation, which, by sympathy, we extend to the whole commonwealth. Thus Cato, when delivering his judgment against Catiline, says, Longe mihi alia mens est, P. C. cum res, atque pericula nostra considero, et cum sententias nonnullorum ipse mecum reputo. Illi mihi disseruisse videntur de pœna eorum, qui patriæ, parentibus, aris, atque focis suis bellum paravere: res autem monet cavere ab illis magis, quam, quid in illos statuamus, consultare.

It has been questioned whether any act, which if generally practised would be detrimental to the

Digitized by Google

community, can be rendered lawful by exceptional circumstances. It is obvious that if the circumstances be really exceptional, the case is at once taken out of the general rule, or rather is reducible to some still more comprehensive rule, which supports instead of weakening the first, and at the same time keeps the apparent exceptions within definite limits. Thus the agent is not left the irresponsible judge of exceptions, which he is but too likely to admit when in his own favour, more especially where the end seems to justify the employment of doubtful means. All Englishmen abhor the very name of so dastardly a crime as assassination. Yet some might think it a nice point whether, under the peculiar circumstances of the case, Charlotte Corday should be regarded as a criminal or as a patriot.

In the complicated affairs of human life, two secondary laws of morality often clash with one another. How useful then is the utilitarian principle to decide which ought to preponderate in such doubtful cases.

In estimating the comparative advantages of any act in respect to the happiness of a particular individual and of the community generally (and this is a point most necessary to be considered in political changes), we must recollect that an advantage may be so diffused as to become infinitesimal. Suppose it is thought, that the public might dispense with the services of some particular clerk. The saving of £200 a year, diffused over our thirty millions of population, would be quite inappreciable, while the unfortunate clerk and his family might be ruined. Here, arithmetically considered, the gain on one side

Digitized by Google

is exactly equivalent to the loss on the other. But, in a moral point of view, the misery of the individual is not compensated by the general advantage. Hence such changes should be made gradually, and with great tenderness to the parties concerned.

Various objections have been raised to the utilitarian system of morals. It is said, that when stated in general terms, that is, when we simply say that a man ought to seek his neighbour's good, the observation though incontestable, is trivial. And that when we descend from generals to particulars, and want to know what a man ought to do, when his interest leads one way, and the interests of the community lead another, the rule breaks down, and fails us just where we wanted it. Now this objection is, no doubt, a grave one. It is granted, that in comparing the happiness of one man with that of another, or of many, we are not dealing with an article like silver, which can be actually put into the balance, and weighed. Nor can it be denied, that self-partiality may here find ample scope. But the defect is not in the rule, but in the moral character of the agent, who professes to carry it out. No law can be framed to give specific directions in every conceivable case. It gives principles, by which the good man acts; and, where equity demands it, he goes beyond its mere verbal requirements. Thus Aristotle says, that philosophy had taught him to do uncommanded what others do from fear.

But if we take as the fundamental principle of the utilitarian system, the doctrine of loving one's neighbour as oneself, and if we could possibly bring ourselves so to sympathise with all mankind as to

Digitized by Google

make their happiness and feelings actually our own, the sacrifice of some minor comfort, to which perhaps we have a just claim, would not seem so onerous as it does now. A mother thinks nothing of a sleepless night when she watches a dying infant. This parental affection is an instinct. And can reason and benevolence make no progress towards rivalling in unselfishness a mere instinct? Some indeed consider sympathy or benevolence the foundation not only of the practice of morality, but of all moral feeling and judgment. They say, that by voluntary attention, and imagination, we realise in ourselves the pain and pleasure of our fellow creatures, and thence proceed to pass sentence on actions, which tend to produce either the one or the other. And when this sympathetic feeling becomes deeply rooted in our character, we may reasonably expect the approbation of God, if we believe that God is Love.

If benevolence be in any sense the foundation of morals, its cultivation must be of paramount importance; and it may be worth while, in passing, to consider how far the numerous charitable associations, which have struck such deep root into the very framework of our society, are calculated to increase and strengthen it. No doubt, looking at the relief of the distressed as a mere matter of business, a well organised and honestly managed association may do more work in less time, and better than all the contributors acting singly. The public relief by the Poor Law has further the additional advantage of taking from the dissolute and idle all pretext for mendicancy. But if every feeling is best nourished by its own natural aliment, and if

Digitized by Google

the sight of distress and personal sympathy are the natural incitements to benevolence, it follows that we shall more cultivate that feeling by visiting the widow and the fatherless in their affliction, than by drawing a cheque, however large the sum, in favour of a public charity. But in the present age, there is so much dislike of personal trouble, such difficulty, as we have observed on a former occasion, in discovering really worthy objects, and such a plethora of money, that the treasuries of public charities are enlarged, while the feelings of the contributors may become contracted.

We must particularly guard against allowing our feelings of benevolence to be chilled by the ingratitude, which we are sure frequently to meet with, and for which Tacitus has prepared us. Beneficia eo usque lœta sunt, dum videntur exsolvi posse. Ubi multum antevenere, pro gratia odium redditur. Nor are the following lines, caustic though they be, altogether devoid of truth—

Tender-handed stroke a nettle,
And it stings you for your pains:
Grasp it, as a man of mettle,
And it soft as silk remains.

'Tis the same with common natures;
Use them kindly; they rebel:
But be rough as nutmeg graters,
And the rogues will use you well.

An incident which occurred in Arabia may be worth repeating. A chief had long desired, but in vain, to purchase a neighbour's horse. Determined however to obtain it, he disguised himself as a lame

Digitized by Google

beggar, and waylaid the rider. Touched with compassion, the horseman dismounted, and helped the chief into the saddle. The latter immediately struck the horse, galloped on a few paces, and threw off his disguise. The owner said, "I will give you the horse, on the sole condition of your never disclosing the affair." "Why?" asked the chief. "Because," said the other, "if the story be noised abroad, no lame or miserable man will ever find a friend in the desert." The chieftain was struck with the reply, and instantly dismounted.

The utilitarian theory has received very hard names from its opponents, who call it worldly, selfish, and the like. It is charged with placing the Useful before the Just. But is the just anything more than that part of the useful, which concerns itself with certain important acts, tending to preserve the social fabric. The objector will find some difficulty in otherwise defining the Just, and may be challenged to produce either a rule of justice which is not useful, or a useful rule which is not just. Utility must, of course, be understood in its widest meaning. The vice of one man may produce incidental good either to himself or to some particular persons. The heir may be benefited by the fraud of his progenitor. But we do not therefore consider that the fraud was useful, that is, useful to mankind.

Nor is it fair to condemn the doctrine by nicknaming it the doctrine of expediency, unless the objector is prepared to admit that his own principles are not expedient.

Some who have an exalted idea of an innate and infallible moral sense (the existence of which is in-

Digitized by Google

capable of proof), maintain that any external rule of morals, like that of utility, is not only unnecessary, but liable to error; as it argues from the consequences of actions, all of which it is impossible to foresee. Now though perfect foresight is indeed impossible, yet we have quite enough for our present purpose.

We will now drop this discussion, so ably handled by J. S. Mill, and inquire upon what foundation the ordinary morality of every-day life in this country is built. We will dismiss from our minds the vast hordes of our population who make few or no professions of virtue, and confine ourselves to the more decent portion, who attend their church regularly, and are partakers of the holy communion. Should we venture to ask these the nature of their ethical principles, they would agree in telling us that they disregarded the broken cisterns of reason and philosophy, and endeavoured, as far as the imperfection of their nature allowed, to follow the injunctions of the New Testament. Never was there a more complete self-delusion. Let us grant that the maxims laid down by our Saviour and his apostles, (like most other maxims, where a truth or rather some single view of a truth, is compressed into a few words), require to be explained with caution and certain reservations. Nevertheless it is a matter deserving serious consideration whether, in practice, these maxims are not explained away, till they mean absolutely nothing. If any one were to propose to inscribe upon our busy marts of commerce, "Lay not up for yourselves treasures upon earth;" or upon our courts of endless litigation, "If any man will sue thee for thy coat, let him have thy cloak

Digitized by Google

also;" or over the assembly rooms of fashion and frivolity, "If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him. The desire of the eyes and the pride of life, are not of the Father, but of the world;" would not the proposal at once be felt as a satire or an ironical jeer. But surely words which are supposed to be inspired, ought not, anywhere, to be considered out of place. The plain fact, as stated by Mill, is, that while an habitual outward respect is shown to the maxims of Christianity, they have little or no living power over the mind. They are assented to, but not followed; praised, but not used. Men, in general, yield their obedience to another set of rules founded on human reason, custom, and opinion, and which are, in fact, a compromise between Christian principles largely diluted, and the interests of a worldly life.

But how can we expect Christian morality from those who have not Christian faith. The charge thus implied will, at once, be indignantly repelled. We might however cite the testimony of Wilberforce, who in his beautifully written work entitled "A Practical View of the prevailing Religious System of Professed Christians," says, "We must speak out; *their Christianity is not Christianity*." But we prefer letting each man judge himself in the following manner. It is admitted by all sects, that according to the doctrines of the New Testament, we are but pilgrims on earth, journeying to the heavenly Jerusalem, where our hearts and treasure are already. No one who does not value heaven before earth has the slightest pretension to Christian faith. Now whither do our thoughts wander during the frequent intervals of

Digitized by Google

leisure, which occur even to the busiest during day and night. To the inheritance which we profess to prize so highly, or to the veriest trifles of this passing scene?

In addition to the duties which we owe to our fellowmen, there are duties which we owe to the whole animal creation. The good man has no doubt always been merciful to his beast, but mercy ought not to be confined to the few animals which are our private property. The more extended feelings of benevolence, which happily are, I trust, now spreading amongst us, were, until late years, confined in Europe to rare individuals, though in India they have been commanded by religious authority from remote antiquity. The noble letter of S. Hoare to Wombwell, which is printed in "Hone's Every Day Book," vol. I. (July 26), is worthy of all perusal; and the fact that so touching an appeal produced no result, tells little for the feelings of our own countrymen, or of human nature generally. Wordsworth too has done the cause good service. How little the sufferings of animals were formerly regarded, even by men of eminent piety and virtue, appears from the treatment of frogs, which is recommended by Izaak Walton in his "Complete Angler," and which is too cruel to transcribe.

The opposite extreme is over-sensibility, which in the mind, as well as the body, indicates not health but disease, and produces much discomfort to its possessor. Without deciding the vexed question, whether man be rightly classed among the carnivora, I may observe, that one of the chief popular arguments in favour of the affirmative, namely, that man

Digitized by Google

has four canine teeth, is shown to be inconclusive, by the fact that the canine teeth are still more developed in apes, who are confessedly herbivorous. This I have verified by the examination of the skulls of many varieties. Suffice it that man, if not by nature, is at least by habit, generally carnivorous, and in some places, and in some states of society, is compelled by necessity to seek flesh as the only mode of supporting existence. We may suppose that carnivorous animals take some pleasure in the pursuit of their prey, or in circumventing it. If then nature has so framed their mental constitution that following out their instincts and procuring necessary food is, to themselves, not painful, but pleasurable; it seems unreasonable to suppose that man, if rightly classed among the carnivora, ought to be entirely devoid of the same mental armour, though weakened, no doubt, by the consciousness of the pain he is inflicting. Let us then lay down our moral rules with moderation. Μηδεν αγαν. Assuming that the carnivora act according to the will of God, and that their general habits indicate the extreme point to which man may lawfully go, the following rules ought not to be thought unreasonably severe.

1st. Not to put any animal to death without an adequate object.

2ndly. To kill by the least painful method.

3rdly. To take no pleasure in torturing animals. The practice of a pampered kitchen cat playing with a mouse is no argument to the contrary. It ought to be shown that its habits, when wild in Nubia, are the same. I confess however, that I cannot sufficiently account for the frequent instances of animals

Digitized by Google

worrying the sick of their own kind, and for some other awkward facts in natural history.

It may moderate over-sensitiveness to reflect that the pain, which an animal can suffer, is only in proportion to the perfect development of its nervous system, and that the "poor beetle" on whom perhaps we may unconsciously have trodden, does *not* feel the same pang as "when a giant dies." In the very lowest members of the animal creation, there is probably no more feeling than in the sensitive plant.

The fourth and last class of duties, namely, those that a man owes to himself, need not detain us long. Attention to health has already been considered under another head, and with respect to any obligations which a man is under, to attend to his worldly interests, self-love will generally suffice, or more than suffice.

We have thus far endeavoured, by investigation, to obtain some knowledge of what a virtuous act is. Such abstract knowledge (*σοφια*) is founded on perception, which apprehends fundamental principles, and on scientific reasoning which deduces conclusions from them. It thus deals with universals. But when we propose to carry out into action the principles which we have acquired theoretically, intellect must again be called to our aid, and *φρονησις* (which we may translate prudence, or common sense, or that practical wisdom which, like gravitation, keeps all things steady), must show us the best mode of procedure. Prudence then deals with particulars, and can scarcely be acquired without experience, while abstract knowledge can be conveyed to a mere child in the form of a didactic precept. It is from want of

Digitized by Google

prudence, that some men do good actions so inopportunely, or with so little attention to the circumstances of the case, that the actions are shorn of their beauty, and perhaps even offend the party they were intended to benefit. Prudence, again, is required in order to shape our course where two virtues seen to contend together; as for example, where truth and courtesy point out different modes of action, and require reconciliation.

In carrying out a virtuous intention then, as in the case of all deliberate human action, we proceed on a syllogism, of which abstract knowledge gives us the major premiss, and prudence the minor. Demosthenes says, deliberation is the beginning of all virtue, and consistent perfection its end.

Of a good action we cannot do otherwise than approve. But before bestowing approbation on the doer, we must believe that his motive also was good. We admire and love him, not for his bare deed, but for the qualities which it is supposed to evidence. It is to be feared that many a good action would lose its lustre, if the low, or at least mixed motives which prompted it were all laid bare. Among such motives we may enumerate pride—the desire of rising in the world—fear of the censure of unfriendly neighbours — or of punishment by law — the sense of mutual dependance—the expectation of advantage, and the like. These may be considered as providential barriers stemming the full torrent of vice; and when they are removed from any individual, either by his attaining absolute and irresponsible power, as happened to Nero, or by his sinking so low as to have no hope of bettering himself, the conse-

Digitized by Google

quences are bad enough. But when whole masses of men cease to feel the restraint of worldly prudential motives, as in revolutions, plagues, and shipwrecks, their conduct too often resembles that of fiends. Although therefore we cannot accord to such motives any high meed of praise, yet we must not overlook their use, or despise their results. But whoever aims at absolute moral perfection, should use them only as a temporary scaffolding, to be removed bit by bit, as the building advances towards completion.

If then the motive, and the state of heart be so important, it is obvious that we should seek a perfect command over our thoughts, which are in fact the mainsprings of our actions, and keep them ever swayed by a regard to God's presence and authority. And indeed we ought not to consider our minds perfectly attuned, until they have been brought into such complete harmony with the will of God, that we pursue spiritual perfection as an end, and not only assent to the reasonableness of the moral law, but would not wish the smallest of its requirements, even in our own case, to be softened down.

It has been maintained by some, that no action can be called virtuous unless it has cost us a struggle, and has been performed with difficulty. The etymology of the word virtue favors this opinion, and to say the truth, such struggles are too often needed. Perhaps also we value most that which has cost us most. But if the principles laid down in the preceding paragraph are correct, and perfect virtue requires the perfect concurrence of the mind, it follows that the struggle is a proof that virtue is still im-

Digitized by Google

perfect. So far from being in its highest state, it it is only in the lower one, more properly termed *εγκρατεια*, or self-control.

It is not to be expected that virtuous actions should be performed with ease, still less with pleasure, until by long practice they have become habitual. Habit, thus rivetted, operates as an original instinct, giving solidity and permanence to the character of a good man. We may compare it to the habits acquired by mechanical artists, who become able, at last, to perform their difficult manipulations without any visible or painful effort.

It is chiefly with a view to the consistency of their theological opinions, that some are inclined to underrate those who seem amiable by nature. Others do the same from a very different motive, namely, a desire of depreciating a character, which they have no inclination to imitate. Both agree in maintaining that while men act merely from instinct, they act like the lower animals, and their actions cannot be called virtuous. "Aliter esse non potuit," as Velleius says of Cato. But if actions cannot be praiseworthy when they proceed from natural disposition, the actions of angels are not praiseworthy. And as regards human actions, proceeding, by the hypothesis, from innate propensities, we must recollect: 1st, that in order to be perfect, it is necessary that these propensities have been exercised in the mean; 2ndly, that it requires some regulation to keep them there; and, 3rdly, that we cannot suppose the will to be absolutely dormant. But even if we could imagine any human being possessed, by nature, of every virtue, and so perfect that all moral culture was

Digitized by Google

superfluous, it would seem as unreasonable to refuse him the epithet of virtuous, as to refuse the epithet of rich, to one who inherited large possessions, on the ground that he had not acquired them by any exertion of his own. Such possessions and such virtues would be equally real, and equally the gift of God.

We may now attempt to define virtue, as a habit (ηθος), adopted by deliberate preference, (προαιρεσις) of employing all the faculties in due proportion, and in harmony with each other, upon their legitimate objects, controlled by the moral sentiments, and directed by intellect. And as this exercise of our faculties is the best of which our nature is capable, we conclude that it is conformable to the will of the Creator, approved of by Him, and beneficial to mankind. Vice, on the other hand, consists in either the excessive, defective, or perverted action of our faculties, and more especially of our propensities.

Guided by these views, we may be able to decide two questions much argued by Socrates and Plato.

Is virtue a science, and can it be taught? The theory is doubtless a science and may be taught; but if virtue be a habit, it can be acquired only by practice, just as music or painting.

Can one virtue subsist alone, or does not one necessarily require the co-existence of all? Though the mind be indivisible, its faculties are independent of each other; and one, of moderate energy and of easy management, may be kept in order, while others, more ungovernable, may be allowed to run riot. Such cases, indeed, are of every day occurrence. The erroneous idea that some virtue, acquired without

Digitized by Google

much difficulty, atones for, or at least palliates some sin, which easily besets us, tends very often to foster both the virtue and the sin.

Let us now ask what is the actual character of the great mass of mankind. Are their tendencies towards good or evil? I fear that impartial enquiry must confirm the saying of the wise Bias, that the majority are bad—*οι πλειους κακοι*—The difficulty is not in finding, but in selecting proofs.

The habit of giving a bad construction to doubtful actions shews the general verdict of mankind as to the greater probability of evil; or else, the habit of putting things in a worse light than our knowledge warrants, and the pleasure taken in listening to scandal, prove widespread malignity in another way.

If men were naturally inclined to virtue, the more they associated together the better would they become. What then should be the character of that great city London, where the Gospel is preached to all, every week, without money and without price. We will not paint the horrors and abominations of its innumerable dens of crime, but only ask you to consider, out of its two or three millions of inhabitants, how large a number of persons could be found, who if they knew you had ten pounds in your pocket, and could by force, and without fear of detection, rob you of them, would not hesitate to do so? Now to this number of robbers, add a still greater number of persons, who not strong or bold enough for robbery, would yet pick your pocket. Next add the number of tradesmen, who would be shocked at such enormities, but yet would not scruple to cheat you, either by short weight, or by selling adulterated articles.

Digitized by Google

And lastly add those of the better-bred merchants, who would scorn to cheat you, but if they saw you ignorant of business, would not hesitate to overreach you. All these together would doubtless form a goodly portion of our two or three millions. Contrast with their numbers the probable number of persons who would *give* you ten pounds or even shillings if they knew you were in need.

Watchful parents see and lament the evil dispositions which manifest themselves in children even from their tenderest years. Bad temper, or obstinacy, or selfishness, or cruelty, or want of truth. At large schools, these and other evil passions are seen freely developing themselves, like noxious weeds; and those who have had no experience of what goes on at such seminaries, may read a graphic and not overcolored description of them in Cowper's Tirocinium. Now, whence comes all this evil if not natural? Surely it has not been taught by the parents or the tutors.

If men were generally good, friendship would be common, for it is founded on esteem and love, both of which would exist between the good. But true friendship is proverbially rare, and would be rarer still, if each party knew the inner thoughts of the other. No man, however small his reception room, is able to fill it with real friends. We will not go so far as to endorse Rochefaucault's maxim, that "in the misfortunes of our friends there is always something not displeasing," yet the existence, in two languages at least, of a word to express pleasure felt at the misfortune of others (Greek, *επιχαιρεκακία*,

Digitized by Google

and German, Schadenfreude), is an unanswerable proof of our general position.

The old, who have had most experience, commonly think worse of mankind than the young.

If goodness were common, an excellent autocrat would not be, as the Emperor Alexander called it, a happy accident. Absolute power is a test which few can stand. Yet in every state it is necessary that paramount power should exist somewhere. Fearful of the caprices of a despot, we place ourselves under the dominion of a majority, and in order to avoid their equally certain tyranny, are obliged to invent constitutional checks, and thus endeavour to preserve a balance of conflicting parties and interests.

The more prosperous a man is, or in other words the more blessings he receives from the Creator, the more grateful and religious he might be expected to become. To be unthankful is a mark of depravity. And this mark is generally found.

Sufferings and oppression, again, would seem naturally to lead to sympathy with others. But slaves are well known to be the hardest of taskmasters; and the observant Tacitus remarks, "Eo immitior, quia toleraverat."

It has been calculated that in Great Britain, about £50,000 are spent daily in religious and secular education. If such an enormous expenditure produces so unsatisfactory a result, what can we expect in countries where no similar efforts are made? Consider the vast regions of the earth, where neither life nor property is secure. Consider lastly war and its atrocities. Realise if you can a single battle-

Digitized by Google

field, both on the day of actual combat, and on the still more ghastly morrow. Reflect that war, either on a larger or smaller scale, is perpetually, probably even daily, being carried on in one part of the world or another, and then decide whether man's tendencies are towards good or evil.

But though our general view of the human race be thus gloomy, let us gladly take notice of various bright spots which are illumined by the sun as he partially breaks through the cloud. By fixing our minds too exclusively on the wickedness of mankind, we engender a misanthropic and hopeless feeling, which will conduce neither to our usefulness nor our happiness. To deny the existence of much virtue, is to deny a patent fact. Every good man is conscious of having some portion in his own breast, and expects to find the same in others. A cunning lawyer, on the other hand, says Plato, (Rep.), learning the wickedness of man from his own heart, succeeds well, and as the majority of men are wicked, is generally right. But when he crosses a virtuous man, he is puzzled, and is quite at fault with his mistimed suspicions. It is, in fact, a character of which he knows nothing.

Christianity reconciles the apparent contradiction between the glory and baseness of human nature. Its votaries are reminded of their sins, but exhorted to look upwards, and by the assistance of the Holy Spirit, to become partakers of a divine nature. It abases them first, but only to teach them how to rise.

In order to explain our views as to the tendencies of mankind towards vice and virtue, we will use an

Digitized by Google

analogy, which seems to run much closer to the subject, than such analogies usually do.

Man, by nature, may be compared to uncultivated land, and the similarities traced as follows:—

1stly. Uncultivated land is covered with weeds, and comparatively useless. So is the mind of man when untutored.

2ndly. Nevertheless the original parents of every valuable plant grew in such land. Thus in the mind of every man are the germs of the highest virtues.

3rdly. In desert places we are sometimes struck by suddenly coming upon a brilliant flower. So among rude and savage men, we sometimes hear sentiments, or witness actions worthy of the noblest minds.

4thly. Land is of different qualities, but all improvable within certain limits. Thus men are born with different powers, all capable of improvement, but all not capable of being brought to the same degree of perfection.

5thly. Land cannot be cultivated without labour. In like manner, the human mind requires education and careful culture, in order to produce good fruit. We must not hence infer that education, being artificial, is unnatural, for the same reasoning would shew, that because we were born without clothes, it was unnatural to wear them. Parents are led by natural instinct to convey instruction to their children. And

6thly. If land, once cultivated, be neglected, it reverts to its original barrenness. Neglectis urenda filix innascitur arvis. So after education is completed,

Digitized by Google

it is necessary still to exercise the intellect, and to keep a strict watch over our moral nature, lest we gradually fall from the eminence we have gained—Facilis descensus.

Or to take another view, founded on the account in Genesis. If Adam was created perfect, then his faculties, being duly balanced, all acted with proper energy; the moral qualities governing, the intellect being their counsellor, and the propensities their subjects. But since the fall, the propensities have usurped the throne, the intellect has taken part with them, and the higher faculties are kept under like a small fire smothered and concealed by ashes. The better feelings rebel against this unnatural state, often creating disturbance, but the usurpers sometimes succeed in finally silencing the voice of conscience. This is the condition called by theologians "judicial blindness." Thus even the lowest state of moral degradation may be accounted for, without supposing that any new and evil principle was implanted in us at the fall. After an earthquake we see ruins, but all the materials, which form those ruins, were in existence before.

Now the object of moral culture is to bring us back to our lost estate—to renew us after the image of God. A more glorious object cannot be proposed, *καλον γαρ το αθλον, και ἡ ελπις μεγαλη.*

To investigate how this may best be accomplished with the young, would involve a treatise on education. Suffice it to say that with them, as with adults, example will have much more weight than precept.

Let us, however, consider the too common case,

Digitized by Google

where this precious seed time has been wasted, and a vicious character formed. How is it possible to alter it. The difficulty arises from the fact that the change cannot be effected, unless the man himself has a willing mind. But to desire virtue for its own sake, pre-supposes a greater degree of virtue than the vicious possess. We must therefore call to our aid some principle of sufficient force to rouse the patient from his lethargy, and to enable him to overcome both temptation and habit.

Such a principle is fear. A low passion indeed, but one which may be turned to good account. We may dwell on the unlimited power of God, and the probability of his exercising it towards the disobedient; on the temporal evils which vice usually brings in its train, and the still greater evils which it may entail hereafter. So strong is this last consideration, that many ancients, who themselves doubted of a future life, thought, nevertheless, that the doctrine should be inculcated in consequence of its obvious utility. It may be remarked that annihilation is the worst that can happen to a good man, while to a bad man it is the best.

The Scripture, in addressing sinners, first appeals to their fears. It calls upon all men, every where, to repent, *because* a day has been appointed in which they are to be judged. (Acts xvii. 30, 31, and many other passages.)

Fear also is the principle by which criminal law endeavours to keep the bad in check. But though the primary object of law be the preservation of public security, by deterring offenders generally, its restraints operate beneficially upon the convicted

Digitized by Google

individual, at least in one respect, namely, that they stop for a time the commission of vicious actions, and thus assist him in breaking through the habit.

When fear has operated so far as to induce a desire for reformation, and has thus set us on the right road, its chief office is finished. As travellers, we must keep our eyes rather on the country before us, than on what we have passed. Dwelling too much on former errors is useless. The past is gone. The present is yet ours.

Hope now becomes our conductor, assuring us of the favour, assistance and support of an Almighty friend, and promising sufficient comfort in this world, with an eternal reward in the next. Animated by these prospects of victory, the soldier commences the fight in earnest. His chief object is to regulate the affections of the heart, and control all wandering thoughts. Divested of the false glare which imagination threw on it, vice loses the attractions which it once possessed. Henceforth, the will of God is his polar star, and under its guidance he endeavours to shape his course, attending always to the actual duties of the moment, and especially consulting the happiness of those, with whom he is brought into more immediate contact. At length he becomes virtuous by habit, and, as Plato teaches, looks at earthly things as though he were viewing them from above.

But is this a picture drawn from life or from fancy. Do such changes actually occur. If we accept the testimony of numerous religious publications, particularly periodical reports, we shall find it no uncommon case, that some profligate is suddenly touched by a

Digitized by Google

text or sermon, heard accidentally, and is at once converted. Such extraordinary changes are justly called supernatural, as they are not in accordance with the usual operations of nature, which are gradual rather than instantaneous. They are also supposed to be necessarily connected with the reception and belief of what may happen to be the theological tenets of the narrator; without which belief it is often maintained, either that no good action can be done, or that, if done, it is of no value in the sight of God. Many seem dubious which of these alternatives is the best to take, and appear to oscillate between them.

It is evident then that cases of religious conversion do not fully answer our question, which is intended to include the whole human race, all times and all creeds. We want to know what is the actual success of the moral teacher, whether Christian or otherwise. Nor can we, in opposition to all evidence, restrict the practice of virtue, such as we have defined it, and imperfect as it always must be, to professed Christians, and still less to any one sect of them. As to the favour or disfavour with which the virtues of the heterodox may be regarded by their Creator, we willingly remit to others the task of deciding, content, as to ourselves, to say with the poet—

> Let not this weak and erring hand,
> Presume Thy bolts to throw;
> Nor deal damnation round the land,
> On each I judge Thy foe.

But to return to the question. Aristotle says that only now and then can we expect to meet with a few

Digitized by Google

more generous and noble minds, who can be induced to strive after virtue. Let any one consider how many persons of his own circle have, since he became acquainted with them, materially changed their characters for the better. Some change indeed may have taken place. The youth, as he advanced to middle life, may have discarded licentiousness, and become the votary of ambition, or growing older still, may have ceased to be ambitious, but only to become the slave of avarice—

> Imberbis juvenis, tandem custode remoto,
> Gaudet equis canibusque, et aprici gramine campi;
> Cereus in vitium flecti, monitoribus asper,
> Utilium tardus provisor, prodigus æris,
> Sublimis, cupidusque, et amata relinquere pernix.
> Conversis studiis, ætas animusque virilis
> Quærit opes et amicitias, inservit honori,
> Commississe cavet, quod mox mutare laboret.
> Multa senem circumveniunt incommoda; vel quod
> Quærit, et inventis miser abstinet, et timet uti;
> Vel quod res omnes timidè gelidèque ministrat.
> Dilator, spe longus, iners, avidusque futuri,
> Difficilis, querulus, laudator temporis acti
> Se puero, censor castigatorque minorum.

Lastly, let any one judge of the difficulty of making much progress in virtue, by considering how little he has made himself. What markèd improvement has taken place in ourselves since the beginning of the year, or the last birthday. And if, from want of sufficient energy, we cannot make ourselves what we wish, how can we expect to do more with others. We should not therefore be surprised when we meet with injury and ingratitude. Knowing the depravity of mankind generally, and

Digitized by Google

of ourselves in particular, we may look upon the whole human race as infected with the same leprosy, though with different degrees of virulence. This induces forbearance; and from forbearance we may proceed, first to pity, and then to love. We find no difficulty in loving near relations, though far from perfect; and why should it not be possible to extend the same feeling to others also, who are still related to us, though more distantly. This seems to be the only approximative solution of the apparent paradox laid down in the New Testament, that we are bound to love not only our friends, but also our enemies.

It has been stated above, that Hope promises the virtuous man sufficient comfort here, and an eternal reward hereafter. Two objections may be raised to this doctrine.

The first is, that a direct appeal is thus made to selfishness, and that no man can be considered a lover of virtue, who follows it with any view to his own personal advantage, either in this life or the next.

The objector might probably be silenced by asking whether he has discovered any mode of rendering men virtuous with such ease and certainty, as to dispense with the aid which lower motives lend. We have shown that even with this aid, little is ever done, and it were madness therefore to throw it away until we had found a substitute.

The objector cannot mend his case by appealing to Scripture, for there we not only find rewards continually held forth as inducements to excellence, but the commendation of Moses (Heb. xi. 26) it is

Digitized by Google

especially noticed that "he had respect unto the recompence."

The point of the objection lies in the word selfishness, which is too often considered as synonymous with self-love. The latter is one of the original propensities of our nature, and therefore good. Selfishness is its exaggeration and distortion. Self-love prompts a man to take care of his best interests, and it would be difficult to point out how these interests could be better provided for, than by entrusting their care to the person whom they most concern. Selfishness is the excessive desire of worldly goods, without reference to the just or equitable claims of others. Self-love, seeking virtue, subordinates such desires to the requirements of morality, and thus makes worldly goods really goods to their possessor—*απλως αγαθα, ἡμιν αγαθα*. No one calls a man selfish for being more liberal and just than others, but if benevolence and justice are original propensities of our nature, and that man is most excellent who practises them the most, then the just and liberal man may peculiarly be called a self-lover, for while he gives his neighbour money, he gives himself something better still. Thus we see that in the good and prudent man, self-love and social coincide. In the bad and selfish man, passion and appetite overcome the one, as often as they overcome the other.

It may be worth while to note the observations made on this point by Manu. With what interest should we not regard the laws of this venerable Indian sage, if we could but obtain positive proof of his supposed identity with the Menes of the

Digitized by Google

Egyptians, and the mythological Minos of the Greeks, "who seated," as Homer tells us, "in the shades below, holding a golden sceptre, administers justice to the dead."

(Cap. ii. v. 2)—"Self-love is no laudable motive, yet an exemption from self-love is not to be found in this world. On self-love is grounded the study of scripture, and the practice of actions recommended in it."

3. "The expectation of some advantage is the root and origin of every desire to act. Religious austerities and abstinence from sins arise from hope of remuneration."

4. "Not a single act here below appears ever to be done by a man free from self-love, or except from desire of a reward."

5. "He indeed who should persist in discharging his duties without any view to their fruit, would attain hereafter the state of the immortals, and even in this life would enjoy all the virtuous gratification that his fancy could suggest."

And Cap. xii. v. 89, 90. "He who performs religious acts with a view to reward either in this life or the next, attains an equal station with the regents of the lower heaven, but he who performs them disinterestedly, and with a knowledge of God, becomes for ever exempt from a corporeal or material existence."

The second objection is, that it is still a contested point whether facts justify our promising that virtue shall be followed by a temporal reward. With reference to this objection, we guarded our expression, by making *Hope* the promiser. But let us examine the question.

Digitized by Google

There can be no doubt but that vice often, and indeed generally, entails misery. If so, the virtuous must at least be exempt from the miseries caused by vice, and so far gain an advantage. Furthermore, some virtues, such as temperance and prudence, are obviously profitable for this life. Others, as benevolence, tend to win the esteem of mankind, and thus may benefit the possessor also.

On the other hand we must observe, that in every age and nation, there is a certain standard of ordinary morality. This standard it is expected that every one should reach. But it is as dangerous to rise much above, as to fall below it. Urit enim fulgore suo qui prægravat artes, Infra se positas. Any one whose virtues are so conspicuous as to throw those of his fellow citizens into the shade, will probably be maligned and detested while living, though he may be praised when dead. Aristides was banished solely for his virtues. The people were tired of hearing him perpetually styled "the Just."

With the exception of courage, the higher manifestations of virtue are so little understood or appreciated by men generally, that they are often looked upon as exhibitions of mere whim and folly. Paul of Tarsus, who perhaps above all other men, stands out in history as a noble instance of self-devotion and excellence, was told by Festus that "much learning had made him mad."

Every new truth must, of necessity, be, in the first instance, confined to a small minority. If any one consider it his duty to promulgate it, and if it be one which opposes the general current of opinion, on

Digitized by Google

matters held sacred and improper for discussion, he must be prepared for obloquy and persecution, even though his own conduct may have been free from acrimony and unnecessary warmth.

We must therefore conclude, that though virtue naturally conduces to happiness, and would, if generally practised, convert the earth almost into a Paradise, and even as matters now stand, both promises and performs more than vice, yet surrounded as a good man is by the vicious, he is exposed not only to temptations but to injuries, and finds that it is through much tribulation, that he must enter into the kingdom of God.

In enumerating the advantages of virtue, we made no mention of what is usually considered the chief, namely, the testimony of a good conscience. The virtuous man is, of course, not harassed by remorse for atrocious crimes. But as much might be said of a villain, who is often hardened almost beyond compunction. Conscience pains *him* most, who not having enough firmness to resist vice, still retains his moral sensibility. As a man advances towards perfection, this sensibility increases, and small failings, which others would pass over unnoticed, appear to him serious transgressions. Thus we find, in practice, that the watchful and zealous follower of virtue, so far from exhibiting complacent self-satisfaction, fixes his eyes chiefly on his shortcomings. He knows that spotlessness is the condition only of angels. The most that man can attain to is repentance unto life. Under the influence of such a feeling did the unknown Arab record his visit to Mount Sinai, by inscribing on a wall of the

Digitized by Google

monastery, "To this holy place came one, whose name does not deserve to be mentioned, so manifold are his sins. He came here with his family. May whoever reads this, beseech the Almighty to forgive him." And the Persian poet Saädi says, that he asks of God, not that He would reward him for his good deeds, but rather that He would throw the mantle of forgiveness over his sins.

We have seen that the road to virtue is traversed only by few. Let us enquire into the cause.

Socrates maintained that vice arose solely from ignorance, and a similar doctrine seems revived in the present day. Education is looked upon by many as the sovereign remedy which is to cure all the moral diseases of mankind. In order to confute this doctrine, we have only to cite the case of David, and his well-known crime. Surely no one will impute it to ignorance, or to want of education. Without at all under-rating the great advantages of moral culture, or denying that intellectual error, to which we shall presently refer, fosters crime, we must look for some other answer to our question.

It seems a fundamental principle of our nature, that present and visible things, which appeal to the senses, affect us more strongly than future contingencies, or even certainties, which can be apprehended only by the intellect. Near objects appear the largest in proportion to their proximity, and almost fill the field of vision. How difficult is it in health fully to realise our own death-bed scene, with all its attendant feelings, sensations and circumstances.

A man sees a purse of gold left carelessly on a

Digitized by Google

table. He desires to obtain, without trouble, what could otherwise be procured only by painful toil. He allows his fancy to dwell, first, upon the pleasure of possession, and then, on the gratifications which the gold will purchase. Every moment the purse seems more desirable, and the hand is drawn towards it, as iron to the magnet.

Now we must not suppose that this man is necessarily ignorant that he is committing a crime. Video meliora proboque, Deteriora sequor. On the contrary, he has some misgivings of conscience, and a still greater apprehension of detection and punishment. But this last is contingent and future, and the dread of it weighs lighter than the gratification of the present desire. If however there were several persons in the room, who would probably give evidence against him, the sight of these persons would so realise the coming trial and sentence, that he would find no difficulty in leaving the purse untouched.

What this man wants is indeed education; not that sort which dispels ignorance by the communication of abstract knowledge; but self-education, which watchfully and habitually regarding the moral sentiments and intellect, as more worthy than the propensities, employs the imagination in their service, and thus pictures the future consequences of vice, so vividly and permanently on the mind's eye, that the unseen becomes visible. "Whatever withdraws us from the power of the senses, whatever makes the past, the distant, or the future predominate over the present, advances us in the dignity of thinking beings."

Digitized by Google

We believe that vicious actions generally spring from the source indicated above. But other causes also lend their aid. 1st. Disregard of the rights of others; or, in other words, deficient benevolence. 2ndly. Conscience is lulled by superstition suggesting some penance and future atonement, or by a vague intention of repentance, or by frivolous reasons adduced to show that the proposed action may be justifiable, or at least pardonable under peculiar present circumstances. Self-partiality here finds ample scope, more especially as regards the non-fulfilment of positive duties, such as honouring parents, which, from the nature of the case, cannot be defined with the same certainty, as a mere negative duty, such as the non-committal of murder.

Self-partiality must be met by thorough self-examination. E cœlo descendit Γνῶθι σεαυτον. We have only to conceive what an enemy would say of us if he knew all the particulars of the case. Fas est, ab hoste doceri.

The third cause is intellectual error, which may arise from drawing a conclusion unwarranted by the premises, but much more often from carelessly assuming the truth of premises which needed proof. At all periods of life, but especially in youth, (when it is unavoidable,) we receive, on authority, certain propositions, which become in time fixed in the mind so firmly, that doubt seems absurd, and examination needless. To this source we must refer most of the differences which exist as to religion, and the pertinacity or even rancour with which almost every sect maintains its views. Each man professes to have calmly examined both sides of the question,

Digitized by Google

while, in truth, he has often done no more than hunt for arguments in support of his own opinion. That such is a fair statement of facts may be shown as follows.

We find by experience that, as a general rule, the children of every Christian sect adopt the creed of their parents; so do the children of Mahomedans and of Hindoos. Now if these children, as they grew up, really cast off all prejudice, and dispassionately examined the question, they would either come to a unity of belief, or if each religion still found its votaries, they certainly would not range themselves, almost to a man, under the banners of their forefathers.

Arguing from false premises, when the individual is alone in his error, is often considered characteristic of madness. Any one of our acquaintances who, without proof, should proclaim himself a prophet, would be looked upon as insane, while a Mahomedan, who equally without proof, maintains that Mahomet was a prophet, is regarded a reasonable being.

The error we are now pointing out is the mainspring of religious persecution, perhaps the most detestable crime which has ever stained humanity. The French Revolution, with all its horrors, is not to be compared to the systematic torture, burnings and executions which, during so long a period, under the guidance of the Roman Catholic hierarchy and princes, consigned to death a multitude whom no man can number, solely because they refused to accept as infallible, the dogmas of the Romish Church. Upon the first perusal of the narrative, one could only suppose that the actors in such

Digitized by Google

atrocities were moved by diabolical enmity to man, thinly veiled by pretended reverence for God. But if we examine the matter more deeply, and give due weight to the effects of error imbibed from infancy, we shall pass a more lenient judgment, and admit that many may verily have believed that they were doing God service. If it could be demonstrated that salvation existed only in the Church of Rome, it would follow that any one who persuaded his neighbour to leave it, was doing him an irreparable injury, and was a common enemy of the human race. So far, at least, the conclusion follows from the premises. A learned Mahomedan judge, with whom I was once discussing the question of toleration, justified forcible conversion (to his own religion, of course,) on the ground that the infidel himself received no damage; but, on the contrary, gained the privilege of sound religious instruction, while his children, brought up in the true faith, might carry on the succession of believers to the end of time. From much which takes place, even now, in so-called Christian countries, I am afraid we must infer, that the present happy cessation of sanguinary persecution arises, not so much from a conviction of its utter wickedness, as from a fear of retaliation. Those who preach tolerance, must expect to be called Gallios. But the true ground of tolerance is not indifference to truth, but a conviction of the difficulty of attaining it, and therefore of the necessity of making allowance for those, who seem to us to have failed in its pursuit. Though unity of faith might seem most desirable, yet no doubt differences are not altogether disadvan-

Digitized by Google

tageous. Truths thus become viewed from different sides.

What we have styled intellectual error corresponds very closely with what Locke terms false association of ideas. We have already referred to the association of ideas as the foundation of memory. Some of our ideas are associated by education and habit, others by experience, and so forth. Thus, a particular apartment recalls to our minds something we once witnessed in it. Independent ideas, not naturally connected, become, by accident or custom, or the constant din of party, so coupled in men's minds that they operate as a single indivisable idea. Hence arise all superstitions. Hence also the difficulty with which new truths are received. Hence the unfairness of political partizans, who connect excellence with all that emanates from their own leaders, and iniquity with all the measures of their opponents. Hence also the astonishment which people often evince on seeing a murderer, and finding nothing peculiar in his countenance. All they knew of the man was comprised in a single action, possibly quite alien to his general character, and to which he was almost goaded by injuries received. But he and his crime become so identified in the public mind, that it is expected, as a matter of course, that his face should be a mere personification of murder. Thus also the character of a stranger, of whom we know little, is hit off in a trice, while we pause longest in describing the characters of those whom we know best. Of the latter so many traits have been observed, that it is impossible to

Digitized by Google

group them all into one idea, or describe them in a single word. The better we know men, the more, both of good and evil, do we find in them.

False association of ideas, and indeed all errors confined to the intellect, are easily cured in comparison with errors of the affections. For if we are more anxious to be on the side of truth, than to have truth on our side, we shall find no difficulty in examining the principles which we have heretofore accepted unhesitatingly as axioms, and yielding to them just so much belief as their proof warrants. Ideas falsely associated will thus lose their connecting link, and ever after remain apart.

The fourth cause of vice is imitation of those around us. Imitation is a natural propensity, and a certain degree of conformity is necessary to a social being. But decipit exemplum vitiis imitabile. And as we are surrounded by the bad, it requires much originality of mind, and much boldness, to withstand their example, and bear up against the constant dislike and contempt of those, with whom we are in daily intercourse. A solitary philosopher can live virtuously much easier than a workman who labours daily in the society of tipsy companions. In a democracy, singularity is accounted a crime; and the lawless spirit of coercion, which animates irresponsible communities, has often been shown forth in the proceedings of the English Trade Unions. The same causes which make an individual err in conduct, particularly the last-mentioned association of ideas, operate also in causing particular classes to err on particular points, and custom rivets the error. Thus lawyers think almost anything allowable to

Digitized by Google

serve a client. It is thus also that we can account for infanticide among the Rajpoots. A supposed social or political advantage overcomes conscience and natural feeling, and the individual finds himself sheltered by the example and approbation of his fellows. So long as a man's failings or vices are only such as are common to his age and country, and do not injure his reputation, it is quite possible that he may, in other respects, stand out as an example of shining virtues. And this consideration will enable us to explain the apparently enigmatical characters of some great men both of ancient and more modern times. Everyone is not capable of originating improvements, or making discoveries in morality.

The next question we approach is that of moral responsibility, or in other words, is man a free agent? Has he so much power over his actions, as to make him justly blameable for vice?

Moral responsibility has been denied on three grounds. Firstly, because of man's innate depravity; secondly, because his actions are the necessary results of antecedent circumstances; and, thirdly, because freedom of the human will is inconsistent with the foreknowledge of the Creator. The first is sufficiently common and popular, the two last are almost confined to speculative metaphysicians. We will consider them in order.

And, first, it is urged that if man has a natural propensity to vice, he cannot be blamed for acting according to his nature. The same actions which are censured as vicious, when committed by man, are considered innocent when performed by other

Digitized by Google

animals, under the guidance of a similar natural instinct. And although poets, as Juvenal (Sect. xv. v. 159 and seq.), declare man's wickedness to be almost peculiar to himself, yet it is undeniable that the whole class of carnivora kill the defenceless, that spiders attack and eat each other in order to seize on a ready-made web, that the honey of bees is plundered by many other enemies than man, and that, according to the authority of the best entomologists, red ants forcibly reduce a black species to slavery. From analogy therefore we must conclude that man commits the like deeds from innate instinct.

Now if man be, by nature, as utterly depraved as some maintain, and if he has neither the will nor the power to turn to better things, unless by the special grace of God, and if that grace is given only to particular individuals, without our being able to perceive the slightest reason for the selection; then, I admit, that there is great difficulty in showing how a man, who has not received such grace, is morally responsible.

But if the more moderate views of depravity, which we have propounded on a former occasion, be correct, vice can by no means be excused. We must, of course, admit that men start in life with different advantages, whether as regards the original conformation of their minds, or the educational circumstances in which they have been placed. The son of a thief, brought up as a thief, has great difficulty in turning from his evil course, and much allowance must be made for him morally; though it is unreasonable to argue hence, as many seem to do, that he should not be punished criminally, seeing that it is

Digitized by Google

the dread of this very punishment which forms some counterpoise to his evil habits, and assists him in breaking through them.

The question is, whether every man has not sufficient intellect to perceive, that a vicious course is unjustifiable, and sufficient power to restrain himself from vicious actions.

Both these points are matters rather of fact than of argument. I never yet heard of any man who gave general and unhesitating commendation to vice, who approved of it in others, and more especially of robbery or other violence committed against himself. If, then, a man condemns vice in others, it is evident that he has intellect enough to know what it is; and as he cannot put forth any claim of peculiar exemption on his own behalf, he stands self-condemned.

As to the power of a man to restrain his propensities, it is clear that he can be induced to do so both by punishments and rewards. He also does so when in the presence of those whose opinion he respects. If a dog can be cured of an *instinctive* habit of tearing sheep, can we suppose the human race less teachable? But it is certainly possible, that by a series of vicious acts, a man may have formed for himself so vicious a character as to be almost past mending. This however does not diminish his moral responsibility, as he is in fact a voluntary destroyer of himself. Vice is seldom practised but with self-compunction at the first—a man thus perceives that his propensities and his moral faculties are at war. Such a state is obviously unnatural—one or the other should rule paramount. Now, a very little consideration is

Digitized by Google

sufficient to show him, that the propensities are excellent servants, but bad masters, and if uncontrolled, will lead him to ruin. That the moral faculties, on the other hand, are fitted by their superior nature to bear sway, while, as subjects, they only create disturbance.

If he turns his mind from such thoughts, and continues in his vicious courses, is there any wonder if his moral sensibility become extinguished, and he really resemble the obdurate character, which some have drawn as a general likeness of mankind.

The first step downwards is to sink in the estimation of others—to have no character to support. The last and fatal step to sink in one's own. And perhaps one of the satisfactions of flattery is, that it induces a belief that a man's character is not exposed to the public in all its naked truth. Many are more solicitous of their neighbours' good opinion than of their own. It is in the spirit of self-flattery and self-deceit that rogues invent slang terms, by which they designate their crimes. A highway robber has sufficient moral feeling to dislike being spoken of, even by his fellow criminals, in plain terms, and he rather styles himself "a gentleman on the road." A German once assured me that he was not a dishonest man, although he confessed that his conscience was "rather elastic."

The second ground on which the accountability of man has been denied is the doctrine of moral necessity. A man's character, as well as the determining motives to every act, are anterior to the act itself; and such character and motives being given, the act follows as a natural and necessary consequence. If

Digitized by Google

such were not the case, we should have no right to infer a man's character from his acts. And as the same may be shown of every anterior act, we trace back a man's character to his infancy, when he was certainly not a moral agent.

This objection is usually met by observing that everyone is conscious that he is a free agent himself, and that he deals with other men under the conviction that they are free agents also. And, further, that no doctrine can be sound, which is opposed to the evidence of our own consciousness.

But it seems that the greatest part of the difficulty arises from the word necessity being understood in the sense of compulsory force. A man who is about to act in one way, may, if merely in order to show his freedom, act in another; though in this case, he still acts from a motive, namely, the desire of proving himself free. We do not therefore object to the doctrine that men act necessarily from motives, but to the conclusion drawn from it; for in the example given above, we see that the first motive was overruled by another motive, suggested by the mind itself. And the fallacious conclusion arises from omitting all consideration of the important part which the mind takes in forming the character. We are not mere wax, receiving the impression of outward circumstances. Our experience of good and evil, and our reflection on the causes of them, determine us to take a certain course, and this determination is one of the antecedent circumstances which help to form our character. Any theory which omits the consideration of the co-operating power of the mind must be essentially defective.

Digitized by Google

Let us endeavour to analyse a simple case. A man is offered the choice of two pictures, both, we will suppose, female heads. He is inclined to take one, because it is more beautiful; the other, because it reminds him of a friend. Now here is a motive on each side. The man weighs them both, and decides in favour of the most weighty. "Well," says our objector, "your illustration confirms my argument, for where is the freedom of the will. The strongest motive has gained the day, and the man could not but yield to its force." True, but do you not see that the man presides as a judge, balancing conflicting evidence, and finally deciding between the two. What more freedom would you wish. Men determine to follow the stronger of two motives, and call upon their intellect to determine which is the stronger and worthier. This is the extent of the freedom of their wills. And if they were to reverse the process, and determine to follow the weaker motive, no one would call it a proof of greater freedom, but rather of insanity.

Now if the motives to virtue are stronger than those to vice, and men act always according to the motive which, at the moment, appears to them the strongest; it is evident that he who practices vice, has not called in his intellect to counsel him, and by neglecting to do so, has incurred moral responsibility.

The third objection may be stated thus. Whatever God foresees is certain. But all human actions are thus foreseen, and are therefore certain. If, then, all human actions are certain, and cannot be otherwise, man is not a free agent, and therefore not morally responsible.

Digitized by Google

This argument is fallacious, and as pointed out by Whately, the fallacy arises from the word "certain" being used in two different senses. "Certain" in its primary signification (à cerno) denotes conviction, and is transferred, in its secondary meaning, to events which are known. It indicates nothing peculiar in the events themselves, but only points out our knowledge of them. Therefore in the foregoing argument the major premiss is trifling. "God foresees what he knows." Of course. This is a mere explanation of "foresees," no subject and predicate. Try the argument on a common matter, and all difficulty vanishes. A man foresees that water at 212 degrees will boil, and therefore its boiling is certain. But who would thence infer that a man knowing and foreseeing the circumstance was the *cause* of it, and prevented its being otherwise. Thus an argument, which no one would even listen to if applied to common life, is considered as remarkably profound and ingenious, when applied to moral philosophy.

The fallacies which are founded on the word "impossible" may be exposed in a similar manner, by noting the three senses in which the word is used. 1st. There is a mathematical and real impossibility, such as to describe a circle whose centre shall be exterior to its circumference. A problem of this kind is a simple absurdity, requiring the production of a nonentity. 2ndly. Physical impossibility, *i.e.*, something inconsistent with the regular course of nature, and therefore possible only to the Being who appointed, and can alter such course. 3rdly. Moral impossibility, *i.e.*, something which there is no reasonable ground to doubt. But this is very different

Digitized by Google

from the two former impossibilities, for it gradually shades off into the improbable, and from thence even into the probable; it is only a question of degree, and refers to our conception rather than to the event. We say it is impossible that A B should have acted in a particular manner; not because he had no *power*, for in this case he would not be a moral agent, but because we feel certain that he would not act so. This certainty is founded on our knowledge of the circumstances of the case, and of his character. Hence we feel convinced what would be the determination of his will. To suppose a free being to act contrary to his own predominant will is absurd, as it implies an effect without a cause; and if our knowledge of every man's character were perfect, we might with certainty predict every man's actions.

But where is the *impossibility* of God giving man freedom, within defined limits. We give children such restricted freedom, and they often abuse it—See 1 Sam. xxiii. v. 10 and seq. It is clear that if David had not left Keilah, he would *certainly* have been delivered up to Saul. But he quitted Keilah, and escaped. Thus a free choice was given, and the result depended on that choice. See also the promise to Jeroboam, 1 Kings xi. v. 38.

We now proceed to consider the subject of human happiness, and its relation to pleasure and pain.

Men instinctively desire happiness, and make the pursuit of it the great, if not the sole business of their lives. Hence we infer that the pursuit is natural and proper; and, therefore, that happiness here is not incompatible with happiness in a future state.

Digitized by Google

Asceticism denies this conclusion. It assumes all matter to be sinful, and maintains that total abstraction from it is desirable. Thomas a Kempis expresses deep regret that we cannot dispense both with food and sleep. Voluntary austerities are recommended as pleasing to God and profitable to the man himself. A halo of sanctity and mystery is thrown around beings, who thus act in opposition to the instinctive feelings of their nature; and the vulgar gaze with admiration at what appears to them an exhibition of superhuman self-restraint. To the leaven of asceticism must be attributed the gloomy religion of some professors among ourselves. It is unfair to condemn all such as sanctimonious hypocrites. Even good men sometimes fail to see that there is no real opposition between cheerfulness and religion.

It may be urged, that our great aim should be not happiness, but perfection; and the fact that the Almighty continually sends afflictions for our good, shows that happiness in this life is not desirable.

To which it may be replied, that the question under discussion is, not whether the afflictions sent by the Almighty are beneficial, but whether they are so insufficient for their purpose, that we should seek to add to them. Speaking theologically, we might observe that the cross, which a man is told to take up, is *his own* (*τον σταυρον αυτου*), namely, that which has been allotted to him. And as to the contrariety, which is assumed to exist between happiness and perfection, it will be found, as we proceed in our account of happiness, that there is no such opposition between them. It is possible, that the difficulty

Digitized by Google

often experienced in performing virtuous actions, has associated the ideas of virtue and pain. If happiness, were not a good, benevolence, that is, conferring happiness on others, would be doing them no service, which is absurd.

It is often said that self-sacrifice is the only perfect virtue, whereas in fact, it is not a virtue in itself, but only a proof of virtue. When interest and duty combine, they form a lever which few resist. But when they are opposed, or to speak more accurately, when the moral faculties prescribe one course of action, and the inferior propensities another, the virtuous man sacrifices the latter, and thus is said to sacrifice *himself*, as though the moral faculties were no part of him. To such sacrifices we do not object, but we do object to any pain, voluntarily undergone, which does not tend to increase the total sum of happiness.

But what success do men generally meet with in their chase after happiness. Does pleasure or pain predominate. Perhaps our reply will depend much on our own state of mind and outward circumstances at the time, for we all live in a world of our own. Perhaps also we expect of life more than it is capable of bestowing. But the almost universal declaration of men, that they would be unwilling to retrace their lives, seems to prove, that they think them on the whole unhappy, while their desire of continuing life argues an expectation of brighter scenes. Spes alit, et fore cras semper ait melius. One of the genial writers of the "Rejected Addresses," elsewhere says—

Digitized by Google

World, in thy ever busy mart,
I've acted no unnoticed part,
Would I resume it? Oh, no.
Four acts are done, the jest grows stale,
The waning lamps burn dim and pale,
And reason asks—Cui bono.

And again Dryden—

Strange cozenage, none would live past years again,
But all hope pleasure from what still remain—
And from the dregs of life think to receive,
What the first sprightly running could not give.

The cause of this general want of happiness may be soon told. We have seen that the Creator has laid down certain laws, and that man disobeys them. Even if it be doubtful how far obedience would procure happiness, it seems self-evident that no good can reasonably be expected from disobedience.

Happiness may be defined as *a state of mind*—a state wherein, if perfect, we should feel complacency and satisfaction arising from a continuity of unalloyed pleasurable sensations. But the less perfect happiness, to which alone we can aspire, supposes at least a decided predominance of pleasure over pain, and the term "happy" is used relatively, either to our own former condition, or to the condition of other men. Enquiries into this subject are not rendered useless by the fact, that human happiness is but imperfect at the best, any more than disquisitions on health, because no man may be perfectly healthy. It is sufficient that our success in pursuing happiness depends greatly on our own exertions, and that we may be ever approaching nearer to it, although unable absolutely to reach it. Nam si quæstuosa

Digitized by Google

mercatura, fructuosa aratio dicitur, non si altera semper omni damno, altera omnis tempestatis calamitate semper vacet, sed si multo majore ex parte extat in utrâque felicitas; sic vita, non solum si undique referta bonis est, sed si multo majore et graviore ex parte bona propendent, beata recte dici potest. Tusc. V. 31.

As our idea of happiness is intimately connected with pleasure and pain, we must examine these two feelings. To define them is perhaps impossible.

Pleasure is a sensation annexed by the Creator to the gratification of every one of our faculties and propensities. We believe that it was so annexed, in order to induce us to use, and thus to gratify them. This view is suited to raise our idea of the beneficence of the Almighty. He rewards us with immediate pleasure, while we are obeying His laws, and performing acts, of which the consequences reach far beyond ourselves, and beyond the present moment. The wise man comprehends something of these remote consequences, and it gives him additional pleasure to think, that he thus becomes a conscious and willing instrument in furthering the good government of the world. Gorgias of Leontinum said, that he never performed a single action, solely with a view to immediate gratification. And Brutus never opened a book, but in order to become either a wiser or a better man.

In common language, the word "pleasure" is understood to refer almost exclusively to mere animal enjoyments, as in the phrases, "a man of pleasure," "a life devoted to pleasure," while acts proceeding from the moral faculties are termed "duties." If

Digitized by Google

this were a question of words only, the discussion might be remitted to lexicographers. But unfortunately the use of words often begets corresponding thoughts, and thus the mind makes a fatal separation between the ideas of pleasure and duty. Nevertheless, it will scarcely be asserted, that a man who does a kind action feels no pleasure himself. On the contrary, the interest which a benefactor takes in the person whom he has assisted, is almost always more intense, than the reciprocal feelings which are excited in the latter; and hence we may infer, that the former has received greater pleasure from the transaction; or, in other words, that it is more pleasant to give than to receive. And although in thus using "pleasure" in a sense as wide as the whole range of human feeling, we are extending it far beyond its customary signification; yet such extension is not new, for Epicurus, that much maligned philosopher, explained it in a similar manner, and in a letter fortunately still extant, complains of his detractors, who could not, or would not understand his meaning.

Pleasures are either mental or bodily, but the connection is so intimate that an absolute separation is impossible. Corporeal pleasures are heightened by anticipation, while mental pleasures are invigorated by a healthy flow of nervous energy. Music gratifies the hearing, and is, so far, bodily; but who would attribute to the body those sensations, which enable the hearer to realise the crashing fall of the Hailstones, as, mingled with fire, they still run along the ground, or exalt him, while listening to the grand Hallelujah, to a state scarcely compatible with earth.

Digitized by Google

Bodily pleasures, though often spoken of slightingly, are the gift of Providence, and therefore to be enjoyed with gratitude. If short-lived, they offer themselves frequently. We take food above 1,000 times every year. And if it be urged that they are forgotten almost as soon as enjoyed, it may be replied, that the pleasure we receive from having done a good action fades away in due time. In neither case can we live on the past.

The amount of pleasure which arises from any action, depends on the activity and sensibility of the organ or faculty employed. But no faculty can long be active without diminished energy and exhaustion; therefore no pleasure can be perpetual. When we are fatigued, the mere cessation of activity gives a feeling of repose, which is in itself a passive pleasure. But this also ceases after a time, and restlessness, or the desire of activity returns. Thus we oscillate continually between the pleasures of excitement and of tranquillity. Youth inclines to the former; old age and infirmity to the latter. Europeans generally prefer activity, Asiatics, rest. With much tranquillity, many are content with little positive pleasure; with much excitement, others willingly endure some pain.

The greater number of faculties or organs, which we keep in an active state, or, in other words, the more we vary our pursuits, the greater will be the number of pleasures which we are capable of enjoying, and the greater also our chances of happiness. But whosoever follows out this principle must give up the hopes of ambition and the desire of pre-eminence, for he will probably be distanced in every

Digitized by Google

race by the man of one idea, who devotes himself exclusively to a single pursuit. It may be added that hope is to be considered an element of pleasure, chiefly when its fulfilment depends upon ourselves.

As the tastes of sick and healthy persons differ, so do the pleasures of different men. To every one that pleasure seems most eligible, which accords best with his habits. Trahit sua quemque voluptas. Hence the proverb De gustibus. But the habits of the good are virtuous. Therefore to them virtue is pleasure. The epicure at his feast, the mathematician when he solves a problem, a lark in the sky, and a mole in the earth, all receive pleasure, the amount of which depends not on the worth of the object to another party, but on the passion of the individual towards it. Their pleasures, however, may not be equal, as they may differ both in quantity and in quality. This is shown by the fact, that no one who has enjoyed the pleasures of adult life, would consent to become a child again, and enjoy childish amusements, which proves the superiority of the former. The adult is conscious that he has become a being of higher faculties, and this gives him a feeling of dignity more valuable than the comparative exemption from suffering, which he supposes, often without reason, that the child enjoys. It may be remarked, as a singular fact, that the pleasure which is taken in habits, merely acquired, such as in smoking tobacco, seems quite as great as in the gratification of innate and natural propensities. A striking example of this position is afforded by drunkards, who having taken the temperance pledge, and kept it for seven years, have returned to

Digitized by Google

their old habits, and died miserably. It seems as though nature avenged herself on those who turn away from her, by refusing to accord to them the feeling of satiety, which, in other cases, guards men against excess. Few ever injure themselves by drinking too deeply of the limpid spring.

The frequent examples which we meet with of acquired tastes have induced some to maintain that Taste, that is, the perception of what is desirable or admirable, depends merely on the association of ideas. How else, it is said, can whole nations agree in admiring some things, which others dislike. Why do florists agree in despising a tulip with a purple base, which the uninitiated think an added beauty. There is much truth in all this, but still there are certain principles of taste founded in nature, and which, if not self-evident, are admitted by most men when sufficiently instructed. Thus, in music, a satisfactory reason, drawn from synchronous vibration, can be given, why the three notes of the common chord unite more harmoniously than any three others. And in optics, it can easily be explained why orange and purple, combining as they do all the three primary colours, should produce an effect more agreeable to the eye than the combination of orange and red.

It is not necessary to happiness that every propensity should always be gratified. Simultaneous gratification of all would be impossible. It suffices that one or more be gratified, without annoyance to any other.

Pleasure is an end, and a justifiable and rational end. Hence when an action pleases, it is absurd to

Digitized by Google

ask what is its *advantage?* For riches are only a means of pleasure, and the question implies that immediate gratification, that is, our present interest, is not our interest at all.

That pleasure is not only the chief good, but the sole good, is evident from considering that anything which we have no faculties to appreciate, or towards which we have no appetency, must be beyond our nature, and, therefore, no good to us. Other things are desirable only as means, but pleasure, which we are now using in its most extensive sense, as synonymous with happiness, is alone a good in itself. By habit, indeed, the pursuit of the means of happiness may become so absorbing as to constitute the end of action, but such is not the case until the pursuit has become pleasurable. This we have already shown to be the case, even with respect to virtue, and it is obviously so with respect to worldly pursuits, such as amassing wealth.

If, then, human nature be so constituted as to desire nothing but what is either a part of happiness or a means of happiness, it follows that this alone is desirable. And if happiness be the sole end of human action, the promotion of it must be the test by which we ought to judge of human conduct, and, hence, as we have shown on a previous occasion, the criterion of morality. For the difference between virtue and pleasure seems to be, that the former consists in the due exercise of our faculties; while the latter is the natural result of such exercise. Over our own actions we have absolute control, but circumstances, not depending on ourselves, may thwart their expected beneficial result. Therefore,

Digitized by Google

though we can exercise virtue at will, we cannot always command the happiness which ought naturally to accompany it.

It is objected to the doctrine that pleasure, even as we have defined it, is the chief good, that a man, who acts from duty, will often reject advantages, or undergo sufferings, which, if simply weighed against the pleasure of having done what was right, seem undeniably heavier. Socrates might have escaped from prison, or, when brought to trial might, by another line of defence, have avoided the sentence of death. Can it be said that the actual course he adopted was dictated by a love of pleasure?

We reply, that the term "pleasure" includes and supposes the avoidance of its opposite, that is "pain;" and though, under some circumstances, the actual pleasure felt in discharging a duty may offer little inducement to performing it, yet the uneasiness or pain which would be felt were it neglected, may, to a sensitive conscience, be a sufficient stimulus. And as conscience is found, by experience, to remonstrate more against sins of commission than of omission, it follows that still greater pain would be felt were the alternative line of conduct to involve the necessity of doing a bad action, since this, to a virtuous man, seems like a very revulsion of his nature. To apply this to the case of Socrates. Had he saved his life, either by escaping from prison or by demeaning himself to his unjust judges by apologising, and by recanting those principles which he had spent his life in enunciating, that life would have appeared so abject in the estimation not only of his disciples, but of himself, that the loss of it seemed the lesser

Digitized by Google

evil. At the age of seventy, death, though premature, can scarcely be called untimely. "Thus, like a great player, he reserved himself for the last act, and, having sustained his part with dignity, resolved to finish it with glory."

But it may be replied, that the case of Socrates by no means exhausts the subject. He found himself, against his will, placed in a situation of difficulty and danger; others have, of their own free choice, placed themselves in such situations, apparently without reference either to the pursuit of pleasure or the avoidance of pain. Granted that we may account for acts of courage (that is to say, where a man voluntarily exposes himself to danger for some adequate end), upon the supposition that the overweening confidence, which all sanguine men have in their own good fortune, persuades them that they will survive the danger and reap their reward; yet we cannot so easily account for acts of heroic self-devotion, where a man exposes himself not to danger, but to certain destruction. Let us, for the sake of argument, accept as literally true, the account given by history of Quintus Curtius, who, to save his country, leaped into the yawning gulf. What were the motives which prompted him to the deed? In the first place, we may suppose that his benevolent mind contemplated with pleasure the advantages which would accrue to his fellow citizens. Secondly, his imagination was fired with the idea of having it in his power to perform a most singular and unheard of act of valour. Thirdly, the hope of posthumous fame, so generally and eagerly desired by noble minds, sustained him to the last. We can conceive

Digitized by Google

a soul so constituted, that these three feelings, acting together, would be stronger than the fear of death. Such, indeed, is not the working of a common soul, and, consequently, such heroic deeds are proportionately rare.

It is the part of wisdom to look at every action in its remote as well as its immediate consequences. Pleasure is good, only when repentance is not in her train. And, conversely, present pain is wisely endured for future advantage. It is obvious that cases may arise in which the decision, which men may come to, as to the relative amount of pleasure or pain, consequent on some particular action, may depend upon their belief or disbelief in a future state. If our lives be continued beyond the grave, then the pleasures and pains hereafter to be experienced, so far as they depend on the particular action we may happen to be considering, must, of course, be admitted into our computation.

The Stoics maintain that virtue is sufficient for happiness—*οτι αυταρκη αρετη προς ευδαιμονιαν*. But the general experience of mankind contradicts the assertion; and, without endorsing the saying of the dying philosopher, "O virtue, virtue, I have worshipped thee as a goddess, but now perceive thy utter emptiness," we cannot believe that any man on whom huge calamities fall, as they did on Priam, can be pronounced happy. Still less in bodily tortures, which generally unhinge the mind itself. It is conceded that, by admitting into our definition of happiness the health of the body and the external goods of fortune, we do away with all security for its continuance; but such, alas! is the slender thread

Digitized by Google

on which our enjoyments hang. Hence we are cautioned not to call any one happy until we have seen his end. Solon pronounced him the happiest who, being sufficiently provided with externals (namely health, competence, reputation, friends, and good fortune), had lived temperately and done the most honorable deeds. We need not desire an exemption from what is generally considered an evil, namely, the necessity of labor, for we often find that persons thus exempted suffer from depression and imaginary evils, more intolerable than hard work.

Every organ, bodily or mental, which is susceptible of pleasure, is also susceptible of pain, but the empire of the latter is the more powerful and the more extensive. A tooth, for instance, is hardly capable of receiving any direct pleasure, but, as most people know, is subject to excruciating pain. As regards duration, a cancer may cause agonies for years, but no pleasure could be so persistent, or be fairly considered as an equivalent compensation. Even a small pain will often seriously detract from any amount of pleasure. When we are under severe pain we cannot conceive ourselves happy, and fancy that any other evil would be preferable to the one under which we are actually suffering. This uneasiness induces us to attempt its removal, and in practice, pain prompts to action oftener than pleasure. For the pain is present and felt, but absent good is only an object of contemplation, and does not set us in motion until we begin to consider it necessary to our happiness, and feel uneasy at not possessing it.

So strong is the instinct to escape from pain, and so great the natural aversion to it, that unless directed

Digitized by Google

by reason, they often lead us into egregious folly. It seems as if the organ of combativeness were suddenly excited, and the feeling must have vent. If a child is injured by some inanimate thing, he wreaks his vengence on it, and shows his temper against all around. The more ignorant of our countrymen, again, when bread is dear, burn corn. The Dublin mob, enraged against La Touche's bank, burnt their notes. Reckless men, who fancy themselves very unfortunate, are always ripe for riot or revolution, thinking that any change will give them some chance of good. And in obedience to the same impulse, legislators sometimes pass laws, which produce greater evils than those which they were intended to cure.

From the power of pain being greater than that of pleasure, it arises that we are able to do mankind much more harm than good, and also that a single unkindness will efface from their memories many benefits received. Hence also the proverb, that "one enemy is stronger than a hundred friends." And we are in the habit of so far overlooking the numerous blessings we receive from Providence, as to apply the term "visitations" exclusively to evils. Our sympathies also are with the afflicted, not with the prosperous, and we are thus instinctively led to indulge that sympathy by endeavouring to relieve them. Mere reason, in such measure as we have it, would have been insufficient. The instinct then is not an imperfection, but supplies an imperfection. To the Deity however, who has perfect reason, knowledge, and goodness, senses and passions would seem unnecessary.

Digitized by Google

Epicurus pressed much upon his disciples the necessity of turning their attention more to the avoidance of pain, than to the pursuit of active pleasure; and recommended a withdrawal from the giddy scenes of political ambition, (λανθανειν βιωσας,) which are suited only to minds peculiarly constituted, in order to obtain leisure for the cultivation of lighter, simpler, and more natural pleasures. Suburban gardening, now so popular, owns Epicurus as its father. To some restless spirits indeed, such tranquil repose offers no charms. Excitement is their element. To this class we must refer the gambler, who, without the play, would scarcely value the stakes, the energetic demagogue, and even the zealous pleasure-hunter. How tame, to such minds, must appear the beautiful lines of Virgil:—

O fortunatos nimiùm, sua si bona nôrint,
Agricolas! quibus ipsa, procul discordibus armis,
Fundit humo facilem victum justissima tellus.
Si non ingentem foribus domus alta superbis
Mane salutantûm totis vomit ædibus undam;
At secura quies, et nescia fallere vita,
Dives opum variarum; at latis otia fundis,
Mugitusque boûm, mollesque sub arbore somni,
Non absunt; illic saltus, ac lustra ferarum,
Et patiens operum, exiguoque assueta, juventus;
Sacra Deûm, sanctique patres: extrema per illos
Justitia, excedens terris, vestigia fecit.

Fortunatus et ille, Deos qui novit agrestes,
Panaque, Sylvanumque senem, Nymphasque sorores.
Illum non populi fasces, non purpura regum
Flexit, et infidos agitans discordia fratres,
Aut conjurato descendens Dacus ab Istro.
Non res Romanæ, perituraque regna; neque ille,
Aut doluit miserans inopem, aut invidet habenti.

Digitized by Google

It cannot be shown from the constitution of nature, that anything which can be called a serious evil, (unless a painless death be included in the term,) must necessarily befall any one man; but we know, in practice, that some such evils do come to all. Unicum habet Deus filium sine peccato, nullum sine flagello. It is a great thing, therefore, if we can expect evils before they come, and prepare our minds contentedly to accept imperfect, instead of perfect happiness.

'Tis thus celestial wisdom charms the mind,
And makes the happiness, she does not find.

If we examine the source from which evils spring, we shall generally find, that their proximate cause is nonconformity to some one of the laws, which the Creator has laid down for the good government of the world. The law may have been broken, or not attended to, either by ourselves or by others. If by ourselves, we generally feel the evil more deeply, as self-blame is then added to its weight.

Ω πυποι, οιον δη νυ θεους βροτοι αιτιωωνται.
Εξ ημεων γαρ φασιν κακ' εμμεναι· οι δε και αυτοι
Σφησιν ατασθαλιησιν ὑπερ μορον αλγε' εχουσιν.
Od. A. 33.

The object of the punishment is to impress upon ourselves and others the importance of the law. In what other way could its observance have been so well enforced. For example, a fractured bone unites if kept still, but what mode of compelling quiet could have been so efficacious as the one actually ordained? namely, that it should give pain every time it is moved.

Digitized by Google

It often happens, however, that evil is brought upon us solely by the misconduct of others. In such a case what can philosophy do to alleviate our suffering, and enable us to bear up against misfortune.

The Stoics recommend apathy—a remedy which would be certain indeed, if it were only possible. Moreover, as apathy to pain would seem to imply apathy to pleasure also, few would be willing to accept exemption from suffering on such terms, or desire to be converted into stone. The calm, (le beau tranquille,) which we admire, is that of the ocean, not of the stagnant pool. Men indeed vary much in their constitutional sensibility, and the same evils affect them very differently. In this, as in most other matters, the perfection of a man's nature lies in what is justly styled the *golden mean*, equally removed from apathy, and morbid sensibility.

Having relinquished, therefore, all hope of conquering evils by apathy, let us turn our attention to a totally different quarter. Of their proximate cause we have already spoken, but their ultimate cause is the will of God. Were it otherwise, He would cease to be the Omnipotent Ruler of the universe. Now, if He is our Maker, we cannot contend with Him; if our Father, we ought not to distrust Him; inasmuch as the kindly feeling with which human beings regard their children, can, at best, be only an imperfect reflection of His. We believe, therefore, that an abiding confidence in the wisdom and goodness of the Deity is the best mitigator of affliction. With such confidence, murmuring and discontent are impossible. The outward man, the circumference of the circle may be agitated, but the centre is calm.

Digitized by Google

We cannot but *feel* the affliction; nevertheless, though the pain of an amputation is equally great, whether performed by a surgeon to save our life, or by a tyrant for his own amusement, it is obvious that we should bear it with less reluctance in the former case. This practical and absolute submission to the will of God is as different from apathy as the living from the dead. Madame Guyon, who beautifully exemplified in her own life, the patience and fortitude which she recommends, observes that in the progress of our moral course, we must first die to our sins; secondly, instead of being puffed up by our supposed excellences, we must die to our virtues; and, thirdly, which is the last and most difficult of all, we must die to our aversions, that is to say, we must cease to have any reluctance to submit ourselves entirely to the dispensations of Providence; nay, more, we must cheerfully acquiesce in them. Thus Galileo, when afflicted with blindness, said, "It is the will of God, and therefore it is mine;" or, as the Germans tersely express it "Wenn Gott will, ich auch."

The lesson here inculcated is, indeed, hard to be learnt, and in order to obtain its full advantage, it is necessary that the mind should have been so schooled to it beforehand, as to be able to bring it to bear upon any evil the instant it approaches. Principiis obsta. Misfortune resisted at once is shorn of its greatest power.

Having thus performed the first and great duty which affliction calls upon us to discharge, and received from its performance more or less contentation, we may fairly try still further to ease our

Digitized by Google

minds by reflecting on various topics worthy of being considered, and some of which will probably be found peculiarly suitable to our own case.

1. We may need affliction penally—*sub ratione pœnæ*. This is a consideration to be applied to our own calamities, rather than to those of our neighbours.

2. *Sub ratione medicinæ*. Παθηματα, μαθηματα. The human heart is hardened and deteriorated by constant prosperity. It can scarcely bear even uninterrupted bodily health. Voll, toll. But we must use the medicine aright. Sorrow profits only when we avail ourselves of the past in order to improve the future.

3. *Sub ratione disciplinæ*. If one great object of life be the perfecting our moral character, evils help to this end, by teaching patience, and impelling us to the practice of many virtues, which, in a state of prosperity, could have had no place. Often they are intended as a stimulus to exertion. The weeds, which pester our fields, can be kept under, if we will but work.

4. Few severe pains last long. Si longus lenis, si gravis, brevis. The temporary remission of pain, which often occurs during sickness, is felt as something more than relief. It may be considered as equivalent to a positive pleasure.

5. After conceding something to natural and irrepressible feeling, all continuance in grief is contrary to reason, which points out that sorrow is inconsistent with happiness, which, we have seen, is the chief good. To determine to be miserable is unnatural, and when it leads to the neglect of ordinary duties it is a sin of the nature of suicide. Pining or dying

Digitized by Google

from what is termed a "broken heart" is seldom the fate of any but the idle and unemployed. This fact points out that the true remedy is resolute exertion both of body and mind. By engaging in active occupation, we shall best divert our thoughts from sorrows, which, by being perpetually contemplated, seem only to grow greater. It may sometimes, however, be doubtful, whether the extraordinary coolness and self-possession of some men, under severe calamities, arise from their not perceiving the realities of their position, or from their being actually indifferent to them.

6. We often grieve from anticipating evils which never arrive. Nothing is so certain to happen as the unforeseen. Les malheurs des malheurs sont ceux qui n'arrivent jamais. And Tarāfa, the Arab poet, says, "Time will produce events of which thou canst have no idea; and he, to whom thou gavest no commission, will bring thee unexpected news." Furthermore, when an evil has befallen us, we often imagine it worse than we subsequently find it, partly because there are compensatory circumstances which we overlook, and partly because the imagination collects into a focus all the consequences of the evil, whereas, in practice, these consequences come not together, but in detail. For a similar reason, anticipated pleasure, which always shows its brightest side when advancing, generally disappoints.

7. Every day we pass over a portion of our allotted journey, and never have to retrace our steps. Time gradually mitigates all sorrow. A wise man surely ought to forestall time, and quicken on its work. Let us endeavour to think now as lightly of the

Digitized by Google

trouble, as we shall probably think of it ten years hence, if, indeed, we then survive to think of it at all.

8. Worse afflictions may already have befallen us, yet we were enabled to endure them—

O passi graviora, dabit Deus his quoque finem.

So also the King of Ithaca consoled himself—

Τλησομαι εν στηθεσσιν εχων ταλαπενθεα θυμον,
Ηδη γαρ μαλα πολλ' επαθον.

Od. E. 119.

In some cases we may see, not only that we came out of the evil unscathed, but positively received benefit from it. In the persecutions under Queen Mary, a Protestant minister who had been summoned to London for trial, broke his leg during the journey. This evil, which seemed so much extra suffering, detained him on the road, and before he was able to proceed, the queen died, and the persecution ceased.

Now, it is not to be expected that while we are actually in trouble, we shall be able to see in what mode it will benefit us. But from the analogy of former experiences, we may hope that it will turn to good. To use an illustration taken from a pleasing tract: Affliction is a dark cloud, and as we enter into it we feel afraid. It covers the heavens and they become black. The beauty of the day is gone, and the air is chill. At length the rain pours down in torrents, and our minds become as gloomy as the elements. But after a time, the edges of the cloud are fringed with brightness, and as evening approaches, the storm is gone, and we gaze with

Digitized by Google

pleasure on the gorgeous beauty of the sunset clouds. Yet these, all beaming with gold and crimson, are the same which we lately saw, dark and threatening. Thus every cloud of a good man's life at length passes on to the far distant horizon, and is there seen, like an angelic messenger, clothed with heavenly brightness.

9. If much has gone, let us remember how much more is left. We have broken a finger; it might have been that our entire hand were crushed.

Homer consoled himself under his blindness by reflecting on the poetic light which still shone within him—

Τον περι Μουσ' εφιλησε, διδου δ' αγαθον τε κακον τε·
Οφθαλμων μεν αμερσε, διδου δ' ηδειαν αοιδην.
Od. Θ. 63, 64.

10. Others are still more unfortunate than ourselves. Their greater miseries ought to shame us out of discontent. But we are too apt to fix our attention rather on the condition of those who are more fortunate than we are, and comparing our state either with theirs, or with some imaginary standard of happiness, grow dissatisfied and fretful. Yet, as Horace long since remarked, there is scarcely any one whose lot, with all its attendant circumstances, we should be willing to take in exchange for our own.

11. In the loss of externals, consider that they are but externals, and in their nature fugitive. "I knew that my son was mortal," said the bereaved father. To repine at the death of friends, is repining at having to repay a loan. When we have long pos-

Digitized by Google

sessed any good, we become so possessed by it ourselves, that we seldom reflect on the frail tenure by which we hold it, and feel both startled and overwhelmed by its loss. In vain says the Sanscrit poet, "Constantly meditate on inconstancy," (Smara nityam anityatām,) the thought rests on the mind no longer than the morning dew.

We all know, too well, how painful is the death of those we love, but the feeling of desolation comes over us most completely when the mortal remains have been carried from the house never to be seen more, and we gaze silently on the vacant chair. To one so afflicted, what can we say? Every topic of consolation sounds like an idle commonplace.

Among the various attempts which have been made to moderate the grief of a bereaved friend, few exhibit more grandeur of soul than the letter of S. Sulpicius, addressed to Cicero on the death of his daughter Tullia. It is too long to transcribe here, but the following extracts will scarcely be thought tedious or out of place. "Ex Asia rediens, cœpi regiones circumcirca prospicere. Post me erat Ægina, ante Megara, dextrâ Piræus, sinistrâ Corinthus: quæ oppida quodam tempore florentissima fuerunt, nunc prostrata et diruta ante oculos jacent. Cœpi egomet mecum sic cogitare: Hem, nos homunculi indignamur, si quis nostrûm interiit, quorum vita brevior esse debet, cum uno loco tot oppidûm cadavera projecta jaceant?" "Si filia hoc tempore non diem suum obiisset, paucis post annis tamen ei moriendum fuit. Etiam ab hisce tu rebus animum ac cogitationem tuam avoca, atque ea potius reminiscere, quæ digna tua persona sunt; illam, quamdiu fuerit opus

Digitized by Google

ei, vixisse; unà cum respublica fuisse; te patrem suum, prætorem, consulem, augurem vidisse; cum respublica occideret, vitâ excessisse. Quid est, quod tu, aut illa, cum fortuna hoc nomine queri possitis? Denique noli te oblivisci Ciceronem esse, et eum qui aliis consueveris præcipere et dare consilium." "Da hoc illi mortuæ, da cæteris amicis ac familiaribus, qui tuo dolore mœrent: da patriæ, ut, si qua in te opus sit, opera et consilio tuo uti possit. Denique, quoniam in eam fortunam devenimus, ut etiam huic rei nobis serviendum sit: noli committere, ut quisquam te putet non tam filiam, quam reipublicæ tempora, et aliorum victoriam lugere. Vidimus aliquoties secundam pulcherrime te ferre fortunam: fac aliquando intelligamus adversam quoque te æque ferre posse, ne ex omnibus virtutibus hæc una tibi deesse videatur. (Epist. IV. 5.)

Grief at the loss of externals is often increased by our over-valuation of them. A man who is too fond of money will seriously take to heart a loss, to him so inconsiderable, that it will never abridge a single pleasure of his life. Ambition, again, can find no peace, so long as Mordecai refuses his homage. These are diseased states of mind, curable by reason, which moderates our passions, and corrects the one-sided views of imagination.

12. If we believe in spiritual existences, and in their taking an interest in mundane affairs, we may conceive it possible that the mode in which we bear our trials may be an object of solicitude to them. If we could only suppose ourselves thus encompassed by a cloud of witnesses, it would give energy to our exertions.

Digitized by Google

13. When we are disappointed in our expectations of good, let us consider, firstly, that it is not for us to settle what amount of pleasure our great Benefactor ought to bestow upon us. Every blessing is unmerited, and the allotment made is according to the counsel of his own will. Secondly, what we desire as a good might prove an evil. Thirdly, when we have been seeking a good which cannot be universally obtained, such as some particular office, or profit, it is obvious that success must be the exception, and failure the rule. We cannot expect, as individual members of one great family, to appropriate to ourselves all that is desirable. *Αιεν αριστευειν και υπειροχον εμμεναι αλλων* is possible only to an Alexander. Let us, then, substitute for the desire of excelling the desire of excellence, and remember that, on the world's stage, it is not the dignity of the part played, but the mode of playing it, that will ensure a final plaudit.

We must number among the alleviations of sorrow, the sympathy of friends. It may possibly be as difficult to explain satisfactorily the cause of sympathy assuaging grief, as it is fully to account for the nervousness, which most persons feel, when addressing, for the first time at least, a large assembly of strangers, for whose opinion, taking them individually, they care nothing. It suffices that such feelings are a part of our nature, and arise out of our position as social beings.

We must not close this subject without adverting to those minor troubles of everyday life, which are termed vexations and annoyances. These are so frequent as to form a serious drawback to human

Digitized by Google

happiness, and are often borne less patiently than greater evils. Perhaps we scarcely think it worth while to bring against them all our moral and religious force. Nevertheless, it is want of equanimity under such vexations, that constitutes much of what is termed bad temper, and if we estimate the gravity of a fault by the discomfort it causes to others, we shall be justified in passing a severe censure on habitual irritability. It renders a person almost intolerable as a domestic companion; and the sick and nervous should peculiarly strive against this their besetting sin; which is equally injurious to themselves and to others. Such small, but daily strivings, are perhaps the chief moral duty, which their actual condition enables them to perform. It is recorded of Hasan, the son of Ali, that a slave once let fall on him the contents of a dish, boiling hot; and, fearful of some sudden outburst of resentment, appealed to his master's reverence for religion, quoting a well-known passage of the Koran, beginning, "*Paradise is for such as restrain anger.*" Hasan forcibly subdued his rising passion, and said, "I am not angry." The slave continued, "*And for such as forgive men.*" Well, said Hasan, "I will forgive you." The other finished the sentence, "*For God rewardeth the beneficent.*" Upon which, Hasan exclaimed, "If such be the case, I will at once give you your liberty, and 400 pieces of silver."

We now turn our minds to the contemplation of old age, and of its termination.

Swift is the progress of time. It seems but the other day that we were children; and, lo, the best portion of our life is gone. A few grey hairs, like a

Digitized by Google

snow sprinkling in October, first warn us that winter is approaching. The physical powers soon begin to decay. Notwithstanding this, the intellect and judgment may, for a short time, continue to ripen on, but at length these also fail, and man, helpless both in body and mind, lies like a stranded wreck.

It would be some consolation if the moral character improved as age advanced; if

> The soul's dark cottage, battered and decayed,
> Let in fresh light through chinks that time had made,

but unfortunately, such is rarely the case. Peevishness, selfishness and avarice are too frequently found the prevailing characteristics of the old.

Charmed as we may be with the eloquence which Cicero displays in his treatise De Senectute, we are led, both by our reason and our feelings, to admit that the lines of Moore contain a truer, though sadder sentiment—

> Ne'er tell me of glories serenely adorning
> The close of our day, the calm eve of our night;
> Give me back, give me back, the wild freshness of morning,
> Its smiles and its tears are worth evening's best light.

In a well constructed epic poem, the beauty and interest of the story gradually increase more and more until the end. But the tale of life presents a continued anti-climax. Yet most persons wish long life, forgetting, like Tithonus, that it can be lengthened only in one direction, and *that* the least desirable. We scarcely need any proof of the fact, that as age advances, the average number of days of sickness annually increases. If then happiness cannot exist without health, si non est vivere, sed valere, vita, it

Digitized by Google

follows that, in this respect at least, the chances of happiness diminish with declining years.

But we must not picture age as altogether unlovely. The Creator does not forget us, even in our decay. In some cases, the domestic and social affections still burn brightly, and create an interest in passing events. In others, a torpidity of intellect supervenes, and deadens the consciousness of diminished faculties. It is true that we have no longer that elastic step which once enabled us to ascend, without fatigue, the breezy hill; but our regrets are tempered by the consideration, that ease and repose are now as pleasing, as activity was then. If worldly hope no longer beguiles us with day dreams of the future, memory partially consoles us by tinting with rainbow colours the realities of the past. But to the believer in futurity, even hope itself, so far from being dead, only expatiates the more freely, when her pinions soar above the earth.

> Eternal Hope, when yonder spheres sublime
> Pealed their first notes to beat the march of Time,
> Thy glorious youth began; but not to fade
> When all thy sister planets have decayed.
> When wrapt in fire the realms of ether glow,
> And heaven's last thunders shake this world below,
> Thou undismayed, shalt o'er the ruins smile,
> And light thy torch at nature's funeral pile.

And now as to the termination of age in death. Numberless are the images to which the shortness of life has been compared. A tale that is told—the shadow of a passing cloud—the fading flower of the field—the falling leaf—Οἱη περ φυλλων γενεη, τοιηδε και ανδρων.

Digitized by Google

It has been suggested that the painless death, which we sometimes witness in old age, would be the common lot of all, if men lived conformably to nature. But this suggestion is devoid of proof. We have no information as to the death of savages, those I mean, who have not learnt from others the vice of intoxication. Nor do we know much of the death of such wild animals as escape the grip of the carnivora. The larger mammalia, in tropical countries, are pecked at, while still alive, by birds of prey, and among ourselves, domesticated animals, as the cat and dog, have no immunity from cancer and other painful diseases. Oxen and sheep are often carried off in numbers by pestilence, as fatal to them as cholera is to us—

> ———Atqui non Massica Bacchi
> Munera, non illis epulæ nocuere repostæ;
> Frondibus et victu pascuntur simplicis herbæ.
> Pocula sunt fontes liquidi, atque exercita cursu
> Flumina, nec somnos abrumpit cura salubres.

There is a general idea that the death of the old is easy; that they drop off like ripe fruit. But this is true only in some few cases. The aged suffer pain as acutely as others, and feel that utter exhaustion, which is almost as intolerable as pain.

But though we must admit that the sufferings which precede death are a formidable evil, yet as to death itself, we may agree with Epicurus, that it is harmless; for while we live, death is not present with us, and when it is present, we have ceased to exist. We do not fear sleep, yet sleep is a temporary death. And we find that, practically, man thinks of

Digitized by Google

death almost as little as other animals. Like them, when it suddenly stares him in the face, he is alarmed; but when the immediate danger is past, it is forgotten. This is usually considered a thoughtless folly, but may we not rather look upon it as a provision of the Deity, who having given us a foreknowledge of death, in order that we may prepare for it, has taken away that abiding realisation of it, which might either paralyse our exertions, or embitter our lives. And when, after a painful illness, death actually draws near, the patient, instead of fearing it, often looks upon it as a relief. There is reason to believe that men seldom suffer much in the last parting struggle, but leave the world as unconsciously as they entered it.

Manu says, "Let not a man desire life; let him not desire death; let him expect death, as a servant does his wages." The ancient Egyptians used the emblems of death as incentives to the enjoyment of life, and would produce, at feasts, the image of a skeleton inscribed, "Gaze on me, and enjoy yourself, for you will soon become as I am."

Death seems a necessary part of the present constitution of things. If there were no death, there would be no reproduction; no marriage, parents, or children. Perpetual life, to be valuable, must be accompanied by perpetual health and vigour. Therefore all the present physical laws would have to be modified. It has been suggested that as novelty is a great source of pleasure, and as this is greatest in the young, the sum of happiness in the world is increased by the old making way for their juniors.

A more satisfactory observation is, that in a world

Digitized by Google

of sin and sinners, perpetual life would lead to perpetually increasing iniquity. Therefore death is the needful consequence of sin.

With respect to fears beyond the grave, the prudent man will have adopted such views of atonement and reconciliation as he may consider the best, and striven to shape his course according to the dictates of his conscience. He will lament his shortcomings, but will have too much confidence in God, to give himself up to groundless and useless fears.

The views which should be taken by a Christian, both of sickness and of death, are beautifully pourtrayed in a little work, entitled "The Silent Pastor," by Dr. Sadler (Whitfield, Essex-street). That the happy frame of mind, therein described, may be attained both by his readers and himself, is the earnest wish of the writer of these pages. For even if, contrary to all expectation, the event should prove that our belief in futurity was but a delusive dream, we shall certainly suffer nothing from our credulity, nor have any painful consciousness of the frustration of our hope.

We now approach the most difficult of all questions, namely, the origin of evil, moral and physical. The difficulty arises out of the two postulates, that the Deity is of infinite power, and also of infinite benevolence. That evil should have a place in a world created and ruled by such a being, seems an evident contradiction. Yet both these postulates appear to be correct; for how can we suppose any want of power in Him who created the universe. And with regard to benevolence, we see *some* good in the primary object of every law and of every

Digitized by Google

design. Moreover, it would be absurd to suppose that the Creator has endowed man with more benevolence than Himself, or given him an intellect capable of judging and justly condemning his Maker. In all our reasonings we must feel conscious, that to scan or comprehend the divine nature is impossible to finite beings. At the best, we are but spectators, who see one act of a play, and thence conjecture as to its entire plot.

One of the most ancient explanations is, that matter is eternal, and so intractable, that it could not be reduced to perfect order. This view trenches so far upon the omnipotence of the Creator, that it must be rejected as unsatisfactory.

According to the popular mythology of most, if not all heathen nations, the moral character of their gods is of so mixed a nature, and so similar to that of men, that evil would necessarily result from it. But our more exalted view of the Deity compels us to look elsewhere for the origin of evil.

Another solution is, that God has an enemy, even the devil, and that he is the author of evil. One naturally asks, whence came the devil?

If any one replies that the devil was self-created, then there are two gods, antagonistic. Now we cannot suppose that these antagonistic gods agreed in the creation of the universe. But we find that physical evil, at least, was a part of the original scheme of creation. Long before man appeared on earth, there were animals, supplied, no doubt, with nerves of sensation, subject to terror and pain, and other animals with organs of destruction fitted to prey on them. It would be absurd to suppose that

Digitized by Google

herbivorous animals were created by God, and carnivorous ones by the devil.

If, on the other hand, it should be held that the devil himself was created by God, then the existence of the devil is no solution whatever of the origin of evil, as he becomes a mere creature, servant, and agent. If a creature, he can be controlled, or even annihilated. This reasoning would hold good, even if we took the view which is generally believed to be the scriptural one of Satan, namely, that he was created holy, and fell. But I never could see in Scripture the slightest countenance given to this doctrine. The angels who fell (2 Peter ii. 4) are imprisoned, but Satan and his angels, (for they are legion, Mark v. 9), are still loose, and therefore cannot be the same.

There is no mention of Satan in the books of Moses. He is first mentioned 1 Chron. xxi. 1. Some indeed have argued that the book of Job, in which Satan appears conspicuously, is as ancient as the Pentateuch; but even if other reasons were wanting, it seems to me highly improbable that a revelation, having once been made, not only of the existence of Satan, but of his active interference in the conduct of the world, the great law-giver, Moses, and those who wrote immediately after him, should never have even alluded to the subject.

But it is chiefly in the New Testament that Satan and evil spirits (demons in the original) appear continually and prominently. The devil is termed the enemy of God, (Matt. xiii. 39). The author of dumbness, (Luke xi. 1—4), of sickness (Luke xiii. 16) and of lunacy, (compare Matt. xvii. 15, with

Digitized by Google

Luke ix. 37). Of the origin of Satan, no information is given, either in the Old Testament or in the New.

The difficulties of the subject are so great, and natural reason so utterly powerless to solve them, that it may be as well to transcribe such passages of Scripture, as appear to have more immediate reference to them.

Gen. l. 20. Ye thought evil; but God meant it unto good.

Exod. vii. 3; iv. 21; x. 1. God hardened Pharaoh's heart. And in ix. 16, For this cause have I raised thee up.

Deut. ii. 30. The Lord hardened Sihon's spirit, and made his heart obstinate, that he might deliver him into thy hand.

Joshua xi. 19, 20. There was not a city that made peace, for it was of the Lord to harden their hearts, that He might destroy them.

Judges ix. 23. God "sent an evil spirit" to sow contention.

1 Samuel ii. 25. They hearkened not, because the Lord was pleased (so in original) to slay them.

1 Samuel xvi. 14. "An evil spirit from the Lord" troubled Saul, and excited him to commit murder. Cap. xviii. 10, 11; and cap. xix. 9, 10.

2 Samuel xxiv. 1. David was moved by "the Lord" to number Israel. In 1 Chron. xxi. 1, he is said to have been moved to do this by "Satan."

1 Kings xii. 15. "The king hearkened not unto the people, *for* the cause was from the Lord, that He might perform His saying."—See also 2 Chron. x. 15.

1 Kings xxii. 19, 23. The Lord invites the host of

Digitized by Google

heaven to persuade Ahab to his destruction. A spirit volunteers to go as a lying spirit. The Lord says, "Go forth and do so." "The Lord hath put a lying spirit in the mouth of" the false prophets.

Job i., 11. Satan asks permission to injure Job. This leave is granted (12). Hereupon he is able to excite Sabæans and Chaldeans to plunder and murder—to cause fire to come down from heaven—to raise a hurricane from the wilderness—to strike Job down with sickness. Yet (chap. ii., 10) these evils are all declared to proceed from the Almighty Himself.

Psalm cv. 25. He turned (the Egyptians) to hate His people.

Isaiah x. 5, 19. God *sends* Sennacherib against Jerusalem (6), using him as the woodman uses the axe (15). Howbeit, so far from considering himself as God's servant and executioner (7), the king sets out on his expedition solely from motives of pride, insolence, and impiety (10, 11). Therefore, when God has performed His own work on Jerusalem, He will punish Sennacherib (12). Similar doctrine is laid down in chap. xlvii., 6; also in several parts of Judges, as in chaps. iii. and iv.

Isaiah xlv. 7. I create evil.

Ezekiel xiv. 9. And if the prophet be deceived, I the Lord have deceived that prophet, and will destroy him.

Amos iii. 6. Shall there be evil in a city, and the Lord hath not done it.

Matthew vi. 13. And lead us not into temptation.

Mark i. 12, 13. Jesus was "driven" by the spirit into the wilderness to be tempted of the Devil. Matthew and Luke say "led."

Digitized by Google

Acts ii. 23. Him, being delivered up by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God, ye have taken, and by wicked hands have crucified.

Acts iv. 28. Pilate did what God's "counsel determined before to be done."

Romans ix. 18, 22. Whom He will, He hardeneth. Thou wilt then say unto me, Why doth He yet find fault? for who hath resisted His will? Nay, but, O man, who art thou, that thou repliest against God? Shall the thing formed say to Him that formed it, Why hast thou made me thus? Hath not the potter power over the clay of the same lump, to make one vessel unto honour, and another unto dishonour? What if God, willing to show His wrath, and to make His power known, endured with much long suffering the vessels of wrath fitted to destruction; etc. See the whole argument from verse 10 to 23.

James i. 13, 14. "Let no man say when he is tempted, I am tempted of God; for God tempteth no man. But every man is tempted, when he is drawn away by his own desire." The original word here used for "tempting" is similar to "temptation" in the Lord's prayer. It conveys the idea rather of trial than of temptation.

Rev. xvii. 17. "For God hath put in their heart to fulfil His will, and to agree and give their kingdom to the beast."

The problem to be solved is, first, to connect all these passages together, without explaining away their obvious meaning, and having thus eliminated the doctrine which they seem to teach,— Secondly, to show that it accords with the acknowledged attributes of God, and with well-ascertained facts. Commen-

Digitized by Google

tators have long laboured to solve this problem, but, as it appears to me, with very indifferent success. Those who feel best satisfied with their own explanation of the subject, generally base their theory on one of the following propositions.

The first is, that all evil proceeds from sin; and from this proposition is drawn the corollary, that to connect the Almighty with the evil consequences which arise solely from the wilful disobedience of His creatures is unreasonable. Those evil consequences are penal, and the chief difficulty of the subject arises from our forgetting that justice is as much an attribute of the Almighty as benevolence.

But while we admit that all sin produces evil, we cannot receive as an axiom the converse proposition, that all evil is produced by sin. On the contrary, we have already seen that animals suffered before sin entered the world, and they continue to suffer, though sinless, at the present day. An explanation of their sufferings has been sought by the Hindūs in the doctrine of metempsychosis, whereby the souls of sinful men are supposed to enter the bodies of lower animals, and there to expiate the penalty of their crimes. But this doctrine, even if it were otherwise probable, fails to reach the case of those animals which lived and suffered ages before man existed. The young of our own species also suffer, before they are capable of disobedience, and, however reasonable the general argument may be in the case of Adam, who was created holy, and might perhaps have remained so, had he pleased, it does not apply to his descendants, who are fashioned after

Digitized by Google

his fallen image. For though to evade the difficulty Adam is called by theologians the "federal head," in whom the whole human race virtually existed, yet every child born into the world is absolutely a new creation, and doubtless requires the exertion of the same Divine power as that which brought Adam forth. The *continuance* then of a race, so prone to sin, that not one of its unnumbered millions has ever avoided it, and subject, in consequence of that sin, to the manifold evils of this present life, is not sufficiently accounted for by Adam's fall. And if to the evils of this world, we add the torments of a future state, which, according to general belief, will be the portion of the vast majority of mankind, it becomes still more unintelligible why such a state of things is permitted to go on.

The second proposition is, that evil is the parent of good. In some instances we perceive the uses of evil, and our ignorance alone prevents our discovering them in all.

But though we may admit that every evil is calculated either to prevent a greater evil, or to produce a positive good, it is clear that this beneficial effect is contingent on its being rightly employed; and indeed the Scriptures go no further when they assert that all things shall work together for good, *to those who love God.* But even if the proposition were universally true, and every evil produced good to all concerned, it would still fail altogether in answering the question, why the Ruler of the Universe has not effected the good without the concomitant evil.

Digitized by Google

We may possibly understand this hereafter, but at present must be content, like the fabled Prince of Abyssinia, to acquiesce in a "conclusion, wherein nothing is concluded."

FINIS.

WERTHEIMER AND CO., PRINTERS, FINSBURY CIRCUS.

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google